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Diablos, Machos, Broncos and Indios: The Politics and Poetics of History in Northern Guerrero

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Diablos, Machos, Broncos and Indios: The Politics and Poetics of History in Northern Guerrero

by

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May, 2009

Dedication

For:

David Nathan Johnson† and Eleanor Magruder Johnson

Fidel de la Puente Fabián† and Fidel de la Puente Basabe

Clara Elena de la Puente Johnson and Catherine Luisa de la Puente Johnson

Acknowledgements

I must start by mentioning my father, who dedicated much of his life to the study of Mexico. Although he passed away in 1986, his love for the country and its history put me on the intellectual path that lead to this project. My mother, on the hand, has been the soul behind much of what I have done in my life.

At Brown University, John Emigh not only inspired me to look for connections between theater and anthropology, he introduced me to Teloloapan and its mask-makers. I can never express my gratitude enough, and I consider him to be the *padrino* of what follows in these pages.

At the University of Texas, my dissertation advisor Pauline Turner Strong, has been a guiding force. Her encouragement throughout the years I took to complete the first draft was invaluable, as were her suggestions for bibliography and revisions. Deborah Kapchan, Richard Flores, Ward Keeler and Joel Sherzer were also fundamental in the learning and writing process, and I must thank Charles Ramirez Berg as well for agreeing to read my work.

At the Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, I began my professional life and learned to call myself an anthropologist rather than a student of anthropology. I also came into contact with a wealth of academic and popular production on Guerrero to which most non-Mexican writers have not had access. Thanks to all my colleagues and friends

in Chilpancingo and Tixtla. Thanks especially to my students in the Unidad Académica de Antropología Social, whose never-ending tales of *diablos*, *nahuales* and other unfixed places and beings continue to inspire me.

My traveling companion and *comadre* Melissa Biggs has accompanied me both physically and intellectually since we met as students in Austin. This dissertation would not be the same without her.

This project depended extraordinarily on people I met in the field, many of whom continue to play important roles in my life. I must thank, first and foremost, Don Fidel de la Puente Fabián, a fascinating man and brilliant artisan, who passed away in 2000. The members of his extended family, daughters, grandchildren, cousins, nieces and nephews, were instrumental in my understanding of the diablo tradition. His daughter Aurora was particularly supportive, and her house ("*la casa de los descansos*") continues to offer a refuge when we visit Teloloapan. Fidel de la Puente Basabe started out as an "informant," but quickly became much more. No words can convey what I owe him, both personally and professionally. Our daughters are the lights of my life, and they have put up with a great deal during the (long) process of finishing this dissertation. *Los quiero con todo mi corazón*.

Diablos, Machos, Broncos and Indios: The Politics and Poetics of History in Northern Guerrero

Publication No._____

Anne Warren Johnson, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2009

Supervisor: Pauline Turner Strong

The tropes of the *diablo*, the *macho*, the *indio* and the *bronco* have served as a means by which the state of Guerrero, Mexico, has been discursively defined, both externally and internally. I employ a critical reading of these tropes in an analysis of several commemorative performances that characterize the historical imaginary of northern Guerrero. The heart of the study is a description and analysis of the Diablos of Telolopan, a tradition which is celebrated as part of the *Fiestas Patrias*, and commemorates local participation in Mexico's War for Independence, 1810-1821. I compare this tradition with other regional commemorations, including alternative fiestas patrias, the *Abrazo* of Acatempan, and the Festival of Cuauhtémoc, arguing that commemorative performance forms part of a poetics of history which resists the imposition of national hegemonic historiography. I complement the study of local history-making with an analysis of the way in which space and memory come together in the practices that surround death in

Teloloapan.

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Introduction

PROLOGUE

September 1998. The front room of Don Fidel's house, the *Cueva del Diablo*, is also his workshop. It smells of animals: fresh goat and sheep horns are stacked on the roof, and their skins are hung on a nail. Shelves filled with paint cans, tools, and pieces of wood cover one adobe wall. In front is a low bench that serves as a work space. Wooden chairs line the opposite wall. The plaster is studded with nails; on some of them are hung up-side-down masks, on others, pictures of Don Fidel with groups of *diablos* from years past. One of the photographs is in black and white and is the only one in which Don Fidel is dressed as a devil. He can't say exactly what year it's from, but it was a long time ago. He says it shows "*los diablos de antes*;" the masks are much simpler than they are now. Another early photo has Don Fidel standing in the middle of a group of diablos. He is probably about forty, muscular and cocky. He is grinning as makes the horn sign above the head of the *vieja* ("old lady," in this case a man dressed as a female devil), symbolically cuckolding his friend. In the other photos, he is older, still grinning, a little less muscular. An old poster from a museum exhibit in Mexico City is prominently displayed. It says, "*Así Es Méxic*o," or "This is Mexico," and has a picture of one of Don Fidel's early masks. The poster doesn't mention him or Teloloapan.

Young men in various stages of preparation fill the room. Some are helping others put on the *cuera* which, apart from the mask, is the most important part of the diablos' costume. It is a long, hand-stitched leather coat, open in the front, with a slit in the back. Its original purpose was to protect *ganaderos* (ranchers) from bad weather and the spiny plants that cover the rugged countryside of the Tierra Caliente, the hot lands to the east of

Teloloapan. It is still worn by some *calentanos*, including members of riding associations, but it is mostly a sign of the past, evoking nostalgia for the time when cattle contributed a great deal to the local economy and all the *ricos* were ranchers, not the merchants and/or drug traffickers that they tend to be today. It is also said that cueras were worn by the local insurgents who fought against the Spanish soldiers during the war for Independence. But now they are harder to find. No one sells them in Teloloapan, so most of the diablos have to borrow them from older relatives who have had them for a long time or from the few younger men who can afford to buy new cueras in the Tierra Caliente of Guerrero or Michoacán.

Friends and relatives help each other adjust the cueras and belt them into place. Gloves and boots in place, each man puts a towel on his head to protect it from the heavy mask he will wear. Before each devil takes his mask down from the wall, El Peligro gets everyone together for a picture, saying "I want one of the *palomilla*," the gang. El Peligro is Don Fidel's second in command when his son is not around, and usually accompanies the devils when they go out in the streets to make sure they stay together and stay out of trouble. They call him the *enmascarado* because he accompanies the diablos wearing the mask and cape made famous by Mexican wrestlers like *El Santo*. After the picture, the masks go on. Some kneel; others stand as their friends stand behind them to tie on the masks. Each one weighs between ten and twenty five pounds and has to be tightly secured with rope so it doesn't slide around as the devil moves. This accomplished, El Peligro wishes his charges good luck, and the devils leave the house. Filled with energy, they burst into the street, making their distinctive, wordless "Ooh hoo hoo" sound. Some run up to small children to scare them and others try to flirt with the girls who are standing outside their houses to watch them pass by. Young boys not dressed as devils practice cracking their whips. Slowly, they make their way the few blocks to the *zócalo*

where the contest will be held. The plaza fills with the sounds of cracking whips and shrieking girls. As one of the local *bandas de guerra* plays, the flag is lowered and the sun starts to sink. One devil stands on stage, saluting the flag with his hand held over his heart.

The zócalo fills up rapidly with people eager to see the diablos perform. Around twenty devils mill around behind the stage set up for the contest. It is the same stage that was used the night before for the cultural program that accompanied the celebration of the *Grito de Independencia*. The announcer starts the program; he reads the names of the people sitting at the mesa de honor. These include a few teachers and other dignitaries, the presidente municipal and some of his staff, and the queen of the *fiestas patrias* with her court. They will all serve as judges for the contest. The announcer says that the devils will be judged on four things: presentation, dress and mask, ability with the chicote, and endurance. This year, the judging will take place in stages. Each devil will come on stage three times: first to show the judges his presentation and his *indumentaria* and mask, then to crack the whip ten times to display ability and form, and finally to demonstrate endurance by cracking the whip as many times as he can.

Diablo number one comes up onstage. He climbs the stairs carefully; the mask doesn't allow for much visibility. When he is sure of his footing, he makes a huge leap to the middle of the stage, spreads his arms wide, and shakes his head, making diabolic sounds. He postures for a while, pointing to his boots and his gloves, spreading his cuera so that the judges can see it better. He moves to the front of the stage to give the judges a better look at his mask. It is large, although not as large as some of the others. It has four curved ram's horns and two deer antlers, a central figure or nose in the shape of a snarling dog, a similar figure sprouting from under the wide mouth, and two panther figures on each side of its face. The edges of the mask are covered in sheep's wool. The

announcer exhorts everyone to applaud, and the devil exits the stage. One by one, each of the devils comes on stage to present himself. Some have flowers for the queen, the princess, and the duchess; the announcer refers to them as the "*diablos coquetos*" or flirtatious devils. Some of the masks are huge, with up to six pairs of horns and ten figures. They are the ones that weigh the most, and the judges take their size into account when they add up the points.

In the next stage of the contest, each devil comes back on stage to show his ability with the *chicote*. They lean to one side and start to twirl their arms around, attempting to forcefully crack their whips ten times in succession. Those with the larger masks are at a disadvantage, because the whip can easily get trapped in their horns. A few have to hold on to their masks as they crack their whips. Some get the whips tangled up on the first attempt and throw their chicotes on the ground in mock frustration. The audience laughs. Don Fidel comes out to help one devil disentangle the whip. Other devils put on amazing displays. One comes on in a huge mask with large eagles as the central figures and smaller eagles on all sides. He cracks the whip with both his left and his right arm, and the judge says, "Yes, this devil has really been practicing."

It is dark by the time the devils come on stage for the last time. Some are clearly exhausted and only crack the whip a few times. Others, despite having been on their feet and wearing heavy masks for several hours, manage to awe the audience with their endurance. Number eighteen, the one with the eagle mask, cracks his chicote sixty times with his right arm and ten with his left. When they are finished, the judges begin to deliberate. Meanwhile, the devils pose for pictures and the DJ plays the latest pop hits as the devils dance on stage. They pull women and little girls up from the audience to dance with them. The queen stays at the table, but one of the princesses agrees to come up and dances with several devils in turn. She is not always successful in avoiding the sharp

horns that menace her at eye level as twenty devils move around on the small stage. The children, being shorter, are luckier.

Finally, the judges are ready to give their decision. The princess and the duchess give away the second and third prize, and "her gracious majesty, Eva the First" gives the first prize to the devil in the eagle mask, who turns out to be Fidel de la Puente Basabe, Don Fidel's son, who has just returned to Teloloapan from his engineering job in the state capital. He has won this contest more often than not in the twenty odd years he has been participating. He poses for more pictures, the announcer thanks Don Fidel, the devils, and the public who has shown up to support the devils as well as those who have been watching on local television. The music continues for those who want to stay and dance.

For the next nine afternoons, the devils gather in Don Fidel's house to dress and roam around the city in a pack, before going back to the zócalo to parade around frightening children and flirting with girls. They help each other get dressed, just as they did before. This time, younger boys also dress up. Some of them had participated in the *concurso infantil* that had taken place several days earlier, but most are just young boys who want to have fun. One young man takes the part of the vieja, wearing a baggy shirt, a mid-length skirt, and a small wooden mask with horns, a pink face and a red tongue. The vieja is a comic figure, teasing the devils and chasing male onlookers. Each day that the devils go out, they are invited to a different neighborhood to have refreshments in someone's home. The first afternoon, trailed by a small band of young boys, the devils walk to the Colonia Juárez, where an older man, a friend of Don Fidel's who had dressed as a devil in his youth, provides sandwiches and soft drinks. The diablos welcome the chance to take off their masks and rest for a while. When they finish eating and drinking, the host puts on some recorded dance music, and some of the devils entertain the neighbors by dancing in front of the house. One devil dances with the vieja, holding her

round the waist as she makes lascivious movements with her hips. But she proves particularly good at line dancing, a talent she displays when the host played the Spanish version of the popular "Achy Breaky Heart."

Back in the zócalo, a young girl cries for her mother as a devil tries unsuccessfully to play with her. A young boy with a mask on is practicing his whip skills while a little girl watches enthralled. Children run up to devils yelling, "*¡salúdame, diablo!*" A devil is standing with a blushing girl, talking with her, even though the devils are only supposed to make diablo noises. Other devils are walking around the zócalo holding hands with young women. One buys me an ice cream cone. Suddenly, the whole crowd starts to move to one of the side streets, where a confrontation is taking place between one of the devils and an unmasked young man with a whip. As the onlookers surround them, they face off. They are laughing as each tries to see if he can make the other one retreat. The fight ends quickly, and the crowd disperses. It looks like most of the town has turned up to have fun with the diablos, and the zócalo remains crowded into the night.

The next afternoon, El Peligro asks me if I'd like to try on a mask. I think of the devils as extremely masculine characters, so I am a little surprised, but delighted. We go behind the stage and one of the older devils lends me his mask and cuera. I put the mask on, and immediately have difficulty breathing. The cuera is hot and binding, but, guided by the vieja since I can't really see, I walk out into the zócalo. I'm carrying a whip, but I don't even attempt to crack it. El Peligro takes my picture, and a few minutes later, I go back to take the mask off. My neck hurts, and sweat is pouring down my face. I am amazed at the devils' stamina. A little later, as I am talking to two young girls who have become my friends, I tell them that I got to try on the mask and walk out in public. The older one, about twelve years old, seems slightly horrified, and says it would be better if I

found a devil to walk around with. To my mortification, she goes out to find one and drags him back to me. So we promenade around the zócalo for a few minutes and then he returns me to my friends.

On their last day to perform, after visiting their fallen comrades in the cemetery, the diablos all go to the main market with plastic sacks, receiving fruit, pairs of socks, ice cream cones, and spare change. It reminded me quite a bit of trick-or-treating. Afterwards, they all sit down to compare their spoils. Then they go to the main highway that runs through town and shake their tin cans at passing cars to get enough money to pay the 400 *pesos* still owed for barbecue planned for that afternoon. After being invited into a local prostitutes' bar for soft drinks, they begin to make their way to the place reserved for the feast (pig roasted in maguey leaves). Later that night, they go back to the zócalo for the last time to enjoy the public dance that always marks the end of the season. When the dance is winding down, about midnight, they circle around they plaza a few times to the strains of some sad, slow recorded music, waving goodbye, and finally drift away to Don Fidel's house, where they undress and talk about how much fun they had.

DIABLOS, MACHOS, BRONCOS AND INDIOS

This dissertation develops through a layering of ethnographic description, theory, and texts (scholarly, popular and hybrid). It is an attempt to apprehend the interplay between poetics and politics that characterize historical discourse and commemorative performance in the region around Teloloapan. In this interplay, four figures emerge time and time again, although in different guises: *diablos*, *machos*, *broncos* and *indios*. These are the characters that populate the historical landscape in which the relation between

nationalist historiography and local identity is forged and reforged through specific poetical-political practices.

The following chapters center around five of these historical/mnemonical traditions. The first three are civic festivals which celebrate Mexico's independence from Spain: the devil contest described above, which is the centerpiece of Teloloapan's fiestas patrias; the cycle of fiestas patrias that take place in nearby Chilacachapa and Coatepec Costales; and the Abrazo de Acatempan, which celebrates the conclusion of the War for Independence. The fourth is Ixcateopan's festival of Cuauhtémoc, which forefronts Mexico's indigenous heritage as it celebrates the birth and martyrdom of the last Aztec Emperor. And finally, I turn to a more personal practice which engages many of the same themes that underlie the rest of the dissertation: the making of *ofrendas* for the *Días de los Muertos*, or Days of the Dead.

This project attempts to answer three basic research questions about history and performance in northern Guerrero. First, how does each of the five performance traditions confound simplistic notions of centers and peripheries by expressing local political, geographic, gender and class differentiation? Second, what are the common elements shared by these performance traditions that contribute to a regional poetics of history? And finally, how does the historical imaginary of northern Guerrero, expressed through commemorative performance that brings together bodies, places and local histories, relate to the paradigm of linear, heroic, nationalist historiography from which it draws many of its elements?

The work that follows makes several contributions to the discipline of anthropology. On an ethnographic level, I hope to remedy two gaps in the literature. First, very little has been written on the region around Teloloapan, in large part because most anthropologists have paid more attention to the mountains, home to a large part of

Guerrero´s indigenous population. And second, very little ethnographic work has been done about civic ritual in Mexico; there is a tendency for anthropologists interested in symbolic practice to focus on religion. In addition, the majority of these works provide a great deal of ethnographic information about a single ritual tradition, rather than a comparative perspective. It is my contention that exploring a range of commemorative performances in one geographic area will allow me to analyze what I consider to be a regional poetics and politics of history.

On a theoretical level, I hope to contribute to the field of performance studies by examining the way in which popular theater in northern Guerrero emerges from a particular historical and territorial consciousness. Combining insights about the body, popular historiography and place, I construct a frame for understanding the complex relationship between aesthetic practice, political-geographic discourse, and historical tradition.

REFLECTIONS, I

A year after writing the account that opens this dissertation, I returned to Teloloapan to begin what I thought would be fieldwork in the classic anthropological tradition. Typically, this means that a graduate student who has finished all of her coursework for the Ph.D. spends a year in one place as a "participant-observer" in order to write a dissertation based on her experiences in and interpretations of cultural situations that are, at least to a certain degree, foreign to her. The next year would not be at all what I imagined when I packed up my truck in Austin, Texas. I started out as a solitary researcher, but by the time the year was over, I was romantically involved with Don Fidel's son, we were living together just down the street from his father, and many people had forgotten that I was an anthropologist. As I write this, nine years after moving

to Teloloapan, we are living in Chilpancingo, the state capital. Our daughter Clara is seven, and her sister Caty will soon be eighteen months old. I teach full time in a new undergraduate social anthropology program at the Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero in Tixtla, about half an hour from Chilpancingo.

"*Nunca sabemos lo que nos guarda el destino*" ("One never knows what fate holds in store"). This phrase, along with a bemused shake of the head, is the response I usually get when I tell Mexicans how I ended up here. Then, often, "You know, it's usually us who end up in the United States, not the other way around."

Naturally, living in a country as a permanent member of a particular family and society gives one a different perspective on what anthropologists still tend to refer to as the culture of that place. Sometimes I feel like I do have more insight into the experience of living in Teloloapan and Guerrero, while other times, enmeshed in the daily struggles of family life and university bureaucracy, I begin to fear I have lost all sense of perspective. The opposition between "home" and "field" has blurred, and I find myself only sporadically writing "field" notes, now that much of what amazed and fascinated me in the beginning has become almost commonplace. I no longer pause and admire the devil masks I have to step over to get into my home office, and I seem to feel more disgruntled and less understanding when Fidel spends entire days working on a new mask during the rainy season instead of repairing our leaky roof.

It is only to be expected that the dissertation I so carefully outlined years ago would be transformed by experiences both "in" and "after" the field, if such a distinction can be made. I have struggled with the theoretical and ethical considerations involved in writing about people you know and love, and have come to the conclusion that they aren't really that different from the theoretical and ethical considerations involved for any anthropologist who becomes more than just an "outsider" in a place not really his or her

own, or perhaps even for any human being concerned with the moral implications of his or her relationships with other people.

This dissertation, then, is one of the results of my experience in Guerrero, both "in the field" (more of a mindset than a place) and out of it. It centers on the period from late August of 1999 to May of 2001, when we moved to Chilpancingo, although later events are also included when pertinent.

Map of Guerrero (www.encarta.msn.com)

TELOLOAPAN: SOME HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The city of Teloloapan, *cabecera* (head, or county seat) of the *municipio* of the same name, is located in the northern region of Guerrero, a southern Mexican state best known for political and social unrest, the presence of various indigenous groups, and the port of Acapulco. The name is Nahuatl, and means "round stones on (or in) the water."[1] It was founded in prehispanic times and possibly inhabited before 100 C. E. The earliest major ethnic group was the Chontal,[2] a population of immigrants from Michoacán who arrived by way of the Tierra Caliente. Other groups, who were eventually assimilated by the Chontales, were the Izucas and Matlantzincas. The Cohuixcas, a Nahua-affiliated group, arrived after the twelfth century, and established partial control over the region. In the fifteenth century, the entire region was brought under the control of Tenochtitlan and was added to the tributary province of Tepecoacuilco. Due to its strategic location, the region of Teloloapan was of great importance in the continuous struggles between the dominions of Tenochtitlan and the Purépechas of Michoacan. The renewed Chontal resistance to Mexica domination in 1487 gave rise to the legend of the Tecampana, a Romeo and Juliet-type story that continues to circulate in Teloloapan today, and the modern *colonia* (neighborhood) of Mexicapán[3] was probably originally founded by Mexicas sent by the Mexica emperor Ahuitzotl to squelch the rebellion in Teloloapan. Despite its historical origin, many people in Teloloapan consider Mexicapán to be the oldest and most traditional part of the city.

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[1] Other etymologies, such as "river that flows under the stones," are also given.

[2] There is some debate over the origins of the Chontal Indians. Some authors affirm that they were a Nahuatl-speaking group, while others argue that they spoke an unrelated language. At any rate, they are not to be confused with the Chontals of the Mayan region of Mexico and Guatemala.

[3] For the Aztec conquest of Guerrero, see Harvey (1971). See also Lister (1971) for a synthesis of archeological data from Guerrero. Barlow (1948) and Weitlaner (1948) are also interesting early sources for archeological information. For the history of Guerrero see Bustamante and Salazar (1998).For general Mexican history see Meyer and Sherman (1995) and Cosío Villegas (1981).

During the first years after Spain's conquest of Mexico in 1521, Teloloapan was an *encomienda* belonging to a series of conquistadores, and then in 1531, began to pay tribute to the Spanish king and, along with Ixcateopan, became the cabecera of a *corregimiento* and a *república de indios*.[4] Throughout the colonial period, the Indians of the region were expected to pay tribute to the Spanish crown in money, products and labor. Natives of Teloloapan traveled to nearby Taxco and Zacaualpan to work in the mines and sell their agricultural products.[5] This period was marked by a steady demographic decline, due to a combination of disease and an exodus of the population which was largely a result of excessive tributary demands. The population stabilized itself, however, and by the middle of the seventeenth-century, was beginning to increase. This was due, at least in part, to the growing population of mestizos and other castes,[6] which, despite the official prohibition on non-Indian settlement in Indian towns, began to exert an important influence on indigenous society and culture in the eighteenth century.

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[4] *Encomiendas* were parcels of land granted by the Crown to individual Spaniards who, in return for the tribute of the Indians and their labor, was to care for and protect them, both materially and spiritually. *Corregimientos* (in some places known as *alcaldías mayores* or *gobiernos*) were later instituted as a means of centralizing and maintaining the power of the Spanish government, paying tribute directly to the Crown. Both systems were subject to incredible abuses. Mexican colonial society was divided into *repúblicas de españoles*, territories with Spanish and criollo/mestizo populations, and *repúblicas de indios*, territories whose populations were largely, if not exclusively, indigenous. The latter were governed by Indians, more or less according to prehispanic traditions. This system was ostensibly put into place to protect the natives against exploitation. See Gibson (1964), Chevalier (1963) and Simpson (1960) for more on the economy of New Spain.

[5] According to the *Relaciones Geográficas* from the region of Teloloapan, a series of monographs written in 1579 by the corregidor Lucas Pinto at the behest of the Spanish crown, the Indians of Teloloapan and the surrounding areas were expected to provide labor in the mines of Taxco and Zacualpan, at least until 1631, when the *repartimiento* system of forced labor was abolished (Paso y Troncoso 1979). Guerrero's colonial economy was dominated by two major commercial activities: mining, in the north, and the establishment of shipping routes between Asia and the port of Acapulco, in the south. A third source of income for the Spanish settlers was the establishment of coffee plantations in the coastal region. For more information on the early colonial period in Teloloapan, see Guzmán (1999). See also Ramírez (2006) for an interpretation of what is known as the Teloloapan Codex, a document dating from 1558 which presents the account of a conflict between the Indians of Teloloapan and their priest over the tribute demanded by the latter.

[6] For more on the complex social and racial relations in colonial New Spain, see Morner (1967) and Israel (1975).

The later colonial period was also a time of increased conflict over land rights and use, as the raising of livestock and the planting of new agricultural products became more important for the local economy.

By the beginning of the nineteenth-century, social and economic tensions were evident in Teloloapan, as in the rest of Mexico. In 1810, the priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla declared war on Spain; the struggle for Independence would last until 1821. To raise troops in the south, Hidalgo sent José María Morelos, who found support in the Galeana family of Tecpan, the Bravos of Chichihualco and Chilpancingo, Juan Álvarez of Atoyac, and Vicente Guerrero of Tixtla, all fairly prosperous landholders. In what is known as the Plan of Anahuac, Morelos formally proclaimed Mexico's independence in Chilpancingo in 1813. But after the deaths of Hidalgo in 1811 and Morelos in 1815, the insurrectionists were reduced to a small number of guerillas fighting under the command of Vicente Guerrero. His most important follower in the region of Teloloapan was Pedro Ascencio de Alquisiras, who would play an important role in the founding myth of the diablos. From 1815 until the end of the war, Guerrero and Alquisiras waged guerilla warfare against the Spanish forces, placing the region in the center of the struggle for Mexican freedom. For much of the war, Teloloapan remained a royalist stronghold, although the surrounding areas were controlled by insurgents. In 1821, Guerrero and the royalist general, Agustín de Iturbide, came to an agreement to join forces and end the war. According to local tradition and various historical sources (see Guzmán 2001: 91-2), the meeting between them took place in the municipio of Teloloapan, and is known as the *Abrazo de Acatempan* (the "embrace" of Acatempan; see chapter four). In September of 1821, Mexico's independence was formally consummated when Iturbide's army entered Mexico City.

After Iturbide betrayed the ideals of the war by proclaiming himself emperor, Guerrero and Bravo united forces and ousted the "consummator of Independence." However, the two generals, once united against imperialism, soon confronted each other in what would be the first of a long series of struggles between federalists and centralists. Federalist (and York mason) Vicente Guerrero became Mexico's second president.[7] The second vice-president, conservative and Scottish Rite mason Anastasio Bustamante, was the third person to hold the office after leading an armed rebellion against Guerrero, who was then shot by a firing squad, as Iturbide had been before him. The federalist cause was taken up by Antonio López de Santa Ana, President intermittently from 1833 to 1855, and Guerrerense Juan Álvarez, who would serve as President in 1855.

Post-Independence Guerrero was a time of struggle between local and federal authorities and the establishment of regional *caciques* and *caudillos*,[8] the majority of whom had been military leaders. In spite of various delays caused by internal disagreements and the war between Mexico and the United States, the state of Guerrero was officially erected in 1849, and divided into ten districts, including that of Teloloapan. But the temporary truce between Bravo and Álvarez that allowed the political consolidation of the region into a federal entity did not last. Although Bravo died in 1854, Álvarez found a new opponent in President Santa Anna, and managed to oust him from office in 1855. Juan Álvarez served as governor of Guerrero from 1849-1853, and his son Diego was governor three times, in 1862, 1873 and 1881. During this period, struggles in

[7] For more on the relationship between Masonry and 19th-century politics in Mexico, see Di Tella 1996.
[8] Both *cacicazgo* and *caudillismo* refer to the structure of provincial "strongman" politics that is common in much of rural Mexico. A caudillo's power is typically based on physical force and his reputation as a military leader in an armed movement, such as the war for Independence or the Revolution. A cacique's influence is more localized, and while he may be supported by force of arms, his power is based on political and economic networks. For *caudillismo* in Guerrero, see Bustamante and Sarmiento (1999) and Neri (1999). See Miranda (2006) for indigenous participation in armed struggles in nineteenth-century Guerrero.

Guerrero were not so much over land, as they were for local and municipal autonomy, decreasing taxation and the desire to decentralize power (Guardino 1996). Local politicians were divided in terms of their support of President Benito Juárez, with Vicente Jiménez (follower of Bravo) supporting Porfirio Díaz against the reform leader, and Juan Álvarez supporting Juárez. But when Díaz took over the presidency in 1876, he decided to support neither local faction, instead, imposing his own candidates for state political offices. Guerrerense caudillos were finally united in their struggle against Francisco Arce, from Jalisco, who served as governor four times during the Porfiriato. However, the important caudillos who rose to power after Independence were aging men (the majority died before 1900), and successful resistance to the Porfiriato would have to come from a new source.

After the defeat of the French, and the restoration of the liberal Republic in 1867, Teloloapan began to be known as an important center for commercial interaction between Iguala and the Tierra Caliente. The former Indian Republic was officially designated a city in 1871. During the presidency of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910), Teloloapan participated in what was known as the Pax Porfiriana. Díaz, like Mussolini after him, imposed order and promoted progress in Mexico. In Teloloapan, despite a few minor rebellions and instances of sedition against the oppressive federal government, Diaz's presidency was a time of peace and prosperity. The period between 1879 and 1909 saw the installation of a weekly mail service, telephone lines connecting Teloloapan with Iguala, Ixcateopan, Taxco and Chilpancingo, and the construction of new schools, paved streets, new roads, monuments, jails, telegraph lines, drinking water, gas lamps, a hospital and a soap factory (Guzmán 2002:105-106). This period was also marked by the rise of the Salgado, Martínez, and other wealthy families who dominated Teloloapan's economic and political life until recently.

However, discontent provoked by the federal government's suppression of dissenting political opinions, its imposition of politicians from outside the state, rising taxes and the expropriation of farmlands, created a wide base of support for the Revolution of 1910, whose effects began to be felt in Teloloapan in 1911. In Guerrero, the revolution was manifest in three ideological currents, each dominated by middle-class ranchers rather than major landholders: the Maderista, constitutionalist band lead by the Figueroa brothers of Huitzuco, whose base was in the center and northern part of the state; the Zapatista branch lead by Jesús H. Salgado of the municipality of Teloloapan, whose influence would be particularly felt in the Tierra Caliente; and a politically "accomodationist" group in the coastal region later associated with Silvestre Mariscal, who would follow Madero, Huerta and Carranza, successively (Bartra 2000:32). Salgado was originally a supporter of the anti-reelectionist platform of Francisco Madero and his Guerrerense followers the Figueroas, but soon separated himself from their relatively conservative politics and declared himself a supporter of the agrarian reform championed by Emiliano Zapata, who had broken with President Madero in 1911, shortly before the president was assassinated. For the rest of the war, Salgado would be the most important representative of zapatismo in Guerrero, for a time, the hegemonic revolutionary ideology in the state. Salgado served as provisional governor from 1914 until 1915, when the fragile alliance with the Figueroas against Huerta was broken. Insurgent leadership in the state would pass back and forth between the three bands until the end of the war, when, after Mariscal and Salgado were both assassinated in 1920, the Figueroas were among the few left standing.[9]

[9] For more on the Revolution in Guerrero, see Jacobs (1990). Local historian Jesús Guzmán has published an interesting oral history of the Revolution in Teloloapan (1995). For more on Jesús H. Salgado, see González (1983). Teloloapense chronicler Francisco Nájera has also written a biography of Salgado (1997).

As was the case during the War of Independence in the previous century, the city of Teloloapan was never in insurgent hands for any sustained period of time during the Revolution. The municipio was a Zapatista/Salgadista stronghold, but the rebels preferred to maintain their positions in the smaller towns and countryside, fighting the enemy with guerilla techniques well-suited to the mountainous terrain. After the decline and ultimate defeat of the zapatista ideology, Teloloapense dissidents joined ranks to support the Figueroas against Rodolfo Neri, the gubernatorial candidate backed by the new federal government, lead by President Álvaro Obregón. Armed conflicts continued throughout the 1920's and 1930's, until the government of President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), backed by Guerrero governor and former Zapatista Adrián Castrejón, accelerated the process of agrarian reform. These new policies, the government's attempt to finally uphold promises made during the Revolution, gained the support of the municipio's campesino majority, although they alienated many businessmen and landholders from the cabecera.

The period after 1940, known as the "institutional revolution," was a time of increased industrialization and urbanization. In order to find employment, many Teloloapenses, particularly those from outside the cabecera, migrated to cities like Cuernavaca, Veracruz and Mexico City. The *bracero* program of the 1950's was the beginning of an ongoing migration from Teloloapan to the United States, especially cities like Chicago and Los Angeles, although some have found work in Texas, Alabama and other parts of the South. At the same time, local struggles became more linked to agrarian form.

The political violence that marked the 1960's and 1970's in other parts of the state was less notable in Teloloapan.[10] Nevertheless, at the start of the 1980's, *campesinos* from the region of Teloloapan and other municipios of the Second Electoral District (Apaxtla de Castrejón, Cuetzala del Progreso, General Canuto Neri, Pedro Ascencio Alquisiras, Ixcateopan de Cuauhtémoc, and Teloloapan), began to mobilize, forming the *Unión de Ejidos Adrián Castejón*, an agricultural association which sought to negotiate with the state for economic and other forms of support. Although the association was dissolved in 1988, "soon its members would meet again in other contexts and in the heat of new collective actions" (Espinosa 2000: 321).

The federal elections of 1988 constituted a turning point in national politics. The campaign of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of beloved ex-President and agrarian reform leader Lázaro Cárdenas, mobilized large sectors of the Mexican population critical of PRI hegemony, and desperate for change. Cárdenas was backed by a new alliance between leftist political parties: the FDN, or National Democratic Front. In Teloloapan, local activists, like Pedro Pablo Urióstegui Salgado and others, organized themselves in support Cárdenas' candidacy, using catchy phrases like "*vamos a partirle la madre al PRI*," "we're going to really screw the PRI." Although Cárdenas lost the national elections, amongst accusations of electoral fraud, Pedro Pablo won the elections for municipal president, running as a candidate for the PRD, the Revolutionary Democratic Party formed in the aftermath of the presidential elections. The election results were not recognized in Teloloapan, or in other municipios in which the PRD had won, causing Pedro Pablo and his followers to "take" the Ayuntamiento by force. After a long and tense standoff, Pedro Pablo was sworn in as municipal president in April of 1990. Until

[10] See the discussion in chapter four on Guerrero Bronco.

2008, despite internal conflicts and ideological disagreements, the PRD maintained its hegemony in Teloloapan.[11]

When PRD candidate and Acapulco businessman Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo was elected state governor in 2005, many in Teloloapan began to feel the municipality would begin to receive more economic and political support at the state level, given Teloloapan's history of support for the PRD. Even so, the PRI continues to have a strong following, especially in the cabecera. The PAN, whose candidate Vicente Fox won the 2000 national presidential election, has been unable to muster much support in the region.[12] As of this writing, disaffected *perredista* Marino Salgado Miranda is poised to take over the municipal presidency from Timoteo "Alex" Manjarrez, a long-time resident of Chicago, Illinois, who was born near Teloloapan, and returned several years ago to prepare himself as a local politician. Salgado Mirando won the local elections as a member of the Partido de Alternativa Socialdemocrática (the "Alternative Social Democratic Party," or PAS), a new political organization that bills itself as a leftist alternative to the PRD, which suffered the loss of many municipios in the statewide elections of 2008 due at least in part to a widespread perception that Torreblanca's policies have not indicated real social change in Guerrero.

TELOLOAPAN TODAY

In 2000, the municipio of Teloloapan had a population of 46,966 inhabitants, with 19,337 concentrated in the cabecera.[13] It is considered a *mestizo* municipio, although

[11] See Espinosa (2000) for an analysis of Teloloapense politics during this period.

[12] Many people feel that the PAN, a conservative party which has traditionally been allied with the Catholic Church, is the party for "ricos."

[13] This data is according to the 2000 General Population Census. 1,154 are migrants living outside of the municipio. 1.9% of the population is indigenous. See www.inegi.gob.mx. Other economic, demographic and historical data are taken from Guzmán 2002.

Nahuatl is spoken in several towns, notably Coatepec Costales. Locally touted as the "city of the ideal climate," the cabecera is fortuitously situated at an altitude of more than 1,600 meters above sea level. Only April and May, the driest months before the seasonal rains begin around the beginning of June, are uncomfortably hot. The terrain is mountainous and rocky, and there is much talk of subterranean water sources that can be reached through the caves that are said to be located all around the city. The city's most famous landmark is the Tecampana, a large rock that sounds like a bell when struck with a stone.

The cabecera has numerous primary schools, two secondary schools, two prepas (public high schools), and two institutions that offer licenciaturas in education. It also has a health center and two small hospitals. The municipal government sponsors a local television station and an FM radio station. Teloloapan is located on a federal highway that links the regional economic capital of Iguala (sixty kilometers to the east) with Ciudad Altamirano, in the Tierra Caliente on the Guerrero-Michoacán border. Other roads (some paved, some covered in compacted dirt) link the city with other parts of the municipio.

Local economy is driven by agriculture (corn, tomatoes, sorghum, beans, peanuts, and mangos), the raising of livestock and corresponding production of milk products (although the economic importance of ganadería has declined in the last half of this century), and, to a lesser degree, the elaboration of woven and leather items and mezcal. The town of Alahuixtlan was at one time an important center for the production of salt, and the cabecera is also known for its production of bread and production and exportation of *mole*,[14] sold all over the state and in other parts of the nation in the form of a prepared

[14] *Mole* is a sauce for chicken or turkey made out of, among other things, dried chilies and chocolate.

paste. Teloloapan also has deposits of zinc, silver and gold, which have been sporadically mined by foreign-based (Japanese and Canadian) mining companies. In 1999, a Japanese-Mexican consortium announced that it had high hopes for mineral deposits discovered in Tehuixtla, near the cabecera. Many Teloloapenses quit their jobs to work for the mine, rents went up, and the local economy seemed to be doing very well. But in 2002, the mine closed due to low returns, the global economic crisis, and numerous complaints about contamination and environmental impact (Guzmán 2002: 39).

The majority of the population of Teloloapan is Catholic,[15] although there are also significant numbers of Protestant groups, including the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, the National Presbyterian Church, the Mexican Methodist Church, and other smaller Pentecostal and evangelical churches. Direct missionary influence from the United States has been slight, although a group of missionaries did like in Teloloapan for several years in the 1970's. There are two main Catholic temples: the Church of the Asunción de María in the *centro*, and the Church of San Francisco in Mexicapán. There are also several important chapels, including the chapel of San Isidro Labrador in the colonia Juárez and the chapel of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the colonia Eutemio Pinzón, popularly known as El Calvario for the role the chapel plays in the processions of Semana Santa. The Virgin of the Assumption is Teloloapan's patron saint, and her feast day is celebrated on the 15th of August. Members of a group of Teloloapenses residing in Mexico City are important collaborators with the local mayordomos and church authorities in the organization of this festival, although contributions are also made by immigrants in the United States, particularly Chicago. The festival of Saint Francis is celebrated twice a year on October 4 and the second Friday of

[15] 91% of the population is Catholic. According to the census of 2000 (see note 13), the municipio includes 2,444 members "protestants/evangelicals," 736 members of "biblical-non evangelical" religious groups, 128 "others," 692 "without religion," 8 Jews (whom I never met), and 379 "not-specified."

Lent with a large fair in the colonia of Mexicapán. These festivals include the participation of three traditional dances: the *Pastorcitas* (shepherdesses), the *Tecuanes* (jaguars) and the *Moros* (moors).

Apart from these saints' days, the *Días de los Muertos* on November 1 and 2, and Semana Santa are the most important religious occasions. In chapter six, I will discuss the Days of the Dead more fully. *Semana Santa*, or Easter week, is celebrated with a series of processions and dramatic reenactments of the capture and passion of Christ and are similar in style to the more well-known procession that takes place in Taxco. The procession of the *Tres Caídas*, or Three Falls, takes place on the morning of Good Friday, and dramatizes the via crucis. Since nearly the entire population of Teloloapan attends, religious authorities made the decision to divide the procession into two: one that starts at the main church downtown and ends at the chapel of San Isidro Labrador in the colonia Juárez, and another that starts of the church of San Francisco in Mexicapán and ends at the chapel of Our Lady of Guadalupe in El Calvario. The second is considered more traditional, and is dramatized each year by live participants who take the roles of Jesús and the two thieves who were crucified with him. They walk barefoot carrying heavy wooden crosses for the entire procession. Live actors also portray the Virgin María, the Apostles, Roman soldiers, and other characters in the drama. At the end of the procession, Jesús, Dimas and Gestas are tied to crosses and left for some time in view of the audience. Their participation is considered penitence and the taxing roles are taken on as the result of a *promesa* made to God or the saints.

BODIES, PLACES AND HISTORY: CHRONOTOPES AND COMMEMORATIVE PERFORMANCE

Civic Ritual in Mexico

In northern Guerrero, the relationships between the national and the local, memory and history, are enacted and contested through historical commemoration. As many authors have pointed out, post-revolutionary states often rely heavily on commemoration as a means of solidifying the new regime in the public's consciousness, replacing God in their hearts (Ozouf 198: 26). As in post-revolutionary France, the post-Independence governments of nineteenth-century Mexico attempted to remove religious holidays from the official calendar, replacing them with civic holidays that commemorated the new nation's important historical events, like the festival of February 5th commemorating the liberal Constitution of 1857, the festival of May 5th commemorating the Mexican victory over French troops in 1862, and the September 16th celebration of the beginning of Mexico's War for Independence from Spain. With each successive government, new holidays were commemorated, while old ones were abandoned, or at least reinterpreted. The changing calendar of official celebrations was part of the "sacralization" of each political order (Beezely, Martin, and French 1994: xix). Popular celebrations, particularly those in which participants were masked, were perceived as threatening to the social order and impediments to progress. The "culture" of the street" was therefore suppressed in favor of modern, orderly celebrations in state-sanctioned times and places (Beezely 1994: 176).

After Independence, the creation of new civic ceremonies was accompanied by the foundation of a new civic pantheon of heroes who had fought to establish the patria: Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos, Vicente Guerrero, and so on. Even indigenous

warriors like Cuitláhuac and Cuauhtémoc were included (see chapter five). Street and place names were changed to reflect the new national imaginary. [16]

Interestingly, the date chosen to celebrate Mexico's independence was the source of some conflict in nineteenth-century political and cultural circles. The entire century was marked by disputes between liberal and conservative politicians, who found in civic celebration an outlet for the expression of their ideologies. Conservatives advocated the date of September 27, 1821, when Iturbide marched into Mexico City at the head of his ejército trigarante and consummated the country's independence, as the historical moment to be commemorated. This position reflected the belief that Mexico as a nation was founded at the time of the Conquest, and that Mexican identity was the result of its three hundred-year experience as a Spanish colony. Liberals, on the other hand, believed that Mexican independence was initiated on the 16th of September of 1810, at the moment of Hidalgo's Grito. In this view, the Colony represented a historical interruption more than a foundational experience: liberal historiography considered the Mexican nation to have been founded before the conquest, and rooted in prehispanic (and therefore, non-European) identity. Hidalgo, then, represented "the recuperation of Mexican providential destiny" (Pantoja and Rodríquez 2004: 59). The liberal view was to prevail, although debates continued into the twentieth-century (as we will see in chapter five). In 1861, the liberals in power were extremely concerned with the foreign intervention, and utilized the civic ceremonies as a means of presenting a united front against foreign influences, consolidating a Mexican identity essentially different from European identity (ibid. 60).[17]

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[16] In Teloloapan, I lived on Cuauhtémoc Street. In Chilpancingo, our house is on Independencia Street, in the *colonia* Miguel Hidalgo.

[17] The principal promoter of the 1861 and 1862 commemorations was Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, a Liberal writer and intellectual from Tixtla, Guerrero. The school of social anthropology of the Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, where I teach, is located in Tixtla (also the birthplace of Vicente Guerrero), and every year, the town organizes a civic cultural festival which celebrates Altamirano.

The fiestas patrias reached their apogee in the celebration of the first centenary of Mexican Independence in 1910, during the presidency of Porfirio Díaz, who changed the date of the enactment of the Grito from the 16th of September to the night before (not coincidentally, his birthday). Alan Knight argues that the ideology of the fiestas patrias during the Porfiriato "had popular appeal. It captured and gave specific meaning to real political experiences in the nineteenth century civil wars and contributed to an oppositional ideology that fueled the Revolution of 1910" (in Vaughan 1994: 215).[18]

In later decades, the fiestas patrias were propelled by the efforts of teachers, under the mandate of the Secretary of Public Education (SEP) as a means of consolidating the political hegemony of the PRI and a nationalist ideology that revolved around the concept of a multiethnic, popular, industrialized Mexico (ibid.). The Grito was performed as a reaffirmation of the nation-state, a practice binding national to local, in which the President of the Republic, state Governors and Municipal Presidents, gather on the balconies of their respective administrative buildings, and repeat Miguel Hidalgo's 1810 call to revolution, precisely at the same time. This ritual takes place in what Geertz calls the "exemplary centers" of the nation (in Alonso 2004: 470), in this case, the civic plazas from which Mexican towns traditional radiate, and which Alonso calls "metonyms of national political order" (ibid.). But, as Vaughn declares, the patriotic fiesta not only served to justify national and state power structures, but also to "legitimize local power structures, confirm social cohesion, and enhance collective identity in relation to surrounding communities and the state" (1994: 215-216). The fiestas patrias are one means of negotiating the relationships between local, state and national interests.

[18] The fiestas patrias were also celebrated in by Mexican immigrants in the United States beginning in the ninetheenth century, as a means of demonstrating solidarity with the Mexican liberal state, and later, as a from of identity maintenance and negotiation (Taylor 1994).

As Homi Bhabha points out, symbolic representations never signify completely; there is always space in the gap of the sign that allows for alternative interpretations and other narratives (1990: 3). Therefore, the multiple interpretations of symbols may provide the space for counter-hegemonic forms of commemoration or at least gaps in hegemonic commemorative performance through which counter-hegemonic bubbles may emerge. In many forms of state commemoration, such fissures are more difficult to find, as it is in the state's most theatrical discourses—celebrations, monuments, murals, national museums—that what Taussig calls the "magic of the state" (1997) is most clearly displayed.[19]

In commemoration, bodies are "acted upon" by collective memories rewritten as "true" histories. But bodies also transform those memories in the act of remembering. They may even co-opt the state's "magic" in order to confront the state itself (Taussig 1997: 19). The commemorations of the fiestas patrias that take place in northern Guerrero illustrate this point: rather than passively accept the heroes, places and events celebrated in nationalist historiography, these performances celebrate local participation in the War for Independence in ways unforeseen by Mexico's founding fathers and intellectual elite. Commemoration, in this context, is a form of chronotopic evocation (Bakhtin 1981), in which bodies, space and time come together in a particularly Guerrerense poetic of history which blurs the boundaries between past and present and destabilizes the disjuncture between body and discourse which is so present in western history-making As de Certeau writes,

> The violence of the body reaches the written page only through absence, through the intermediary of documents that the historian has been able to see on the sands

[19] But, as Tracey B. Strong writes, "To paraphrase Abbie Hoffman, there is a manner in which one may legitimately say that the role of political theorist is to shout 'theater' in a crowded fire" (in Dening 1993: 75).

> from which a presence has since been washed away, and through a murmur that lets us hear – but from afar – the unknown immensity that seduces and menaces our knowledge (2000: 24).

By means of commemorative performance, what is absent in written/official history "takes on flesh" (Bahktin 1981: 84), as performing *bodies* recreate and resignify *historical* events in which local *places* are transformed into nodes of national importance.

Bodies

Performance is a kind of bodily discourse, or discursive embodiment, which involves both communication and action. As Bauman writes, "not only is communication socially constituted but society is communicatively constituted, produced and reproduced by communicative acts" (1992: xiv). And performance is not just communicative, it is metacommunicative; that is, it is a way for its participants to comment upon their experiences. Along these same lines, performance is reflexive; performance forms are "social forms about society, cultural forms about culture, communicative forms about communication" (ibid.). To paraphrase Geertz, they are stories people tell themselves about themselves (1973).

Much of what has been written on performance in the last twenty-five years has focused on the idea that performance is emergent, a site for the constitution of society as opposed to earlier conceptions founded on the idea that performance "comes after" life (Schechner 1988: 38). This move from performance as a "mirror" to performance as emergent was accompanied by a change in focus from the performance text to the context of performance, and to a concentration on form as well as content. Performance is now seen as a framed, aesthetically marked form of communication that may involve heightened experience, but is integrally intertwined with other aspects of social life.

> Performance usually suggests an aesthetically marked and heightened mode of communication, framed in a special way and put on display for an audience. The

> analysis of performance—indeed the very conduct of performance—highlights the social, cultural, and aesthetic dimensions of the communicative process (Bauman 1992: 41).

For these reasons, performance is more than an imitation or an idealization. It is where social actors construct society, drawing upon past events and experience in ways conditioned by the present, always with "an eye to the future" (Brenneis 1993: 296). Performances are actions, verbal and gestural. Don Handelman points out that public performances "do" something that "necessarily connects the event to the wider world beyond it" (1990: 12). Performance is where people create individual and communal identities, from the "performance in everyday life" conceptualized by Goffman (1959) to state commemorations that create national citizens (Ozouf 1988).

Performance is communicative; it requires community for its existence. Therefore, the role of the audience is of paramount importance. Purely textual approaches to performance only took the performer into account, but audience response and evaluation have become central to performance analyses. Dorothy Noyes, moving from the concept of "folk" to that of "group," writes that, whether the performance functions to segregate or integrate, it always depends on "co present individuals" (1995: 454). She argues against the idea that performance is necessarily about communitas and shared identity, pointing out that "performance, sanctioned and unsanctioned, becomes a key means of boundary construction and maintenance, each festival or demonstration declaring difference between [participants]" (ibid.). However much difference and distinction play a role, cultural performances are still a means of creating community, often based upon those differences. Again, ideas about a shared past are vital. According to Noyes, the primary means by which performance draws upon the past is by repetition, which invokes the past, stands for community and its origins, and effaces present contentions (ibid. 469). Even so, I find that commemorative performance is one context

in which "present contentions" may come to the forefront, defining the context in which these commemorations take place and highlighting the relations of power in which they are produced and interpreted.

Histories

The modern Mexican nation-state rests on a complex interplay of intellectual and popular discourses that create a provocative tension between geographic centers and peripheries. The idea of the nation depended on the creation of a national imaginary with a defined center (Mexico City) and clearly marked origins (Aztec culture), a project in which the academic disciplines of history, cartography and anthropology have participated throughout Mexico's trajectory.

Raymond B. Craib writes that "the history of the modern Mexican state is inextricably intertwined with the space it has not only occupied but actively produced" through the activities of cartographers, explorers and surveyors (2004: 2). He argues that after the war for independence, administrators of the state were particularly interested in the creation of national maps as a means of defining the new nation, enabling "agencies to locate and manage resources, mediate claims over land and water, and establish control without depending upon local knowledge" (ibid. 9). Through the activities of members of the Mexican Society for Geography and Statistics (SMGE), these maps would mimetically create the very state they hoped to represent, blending geography and history "to connect a conceptual space to a narrated place, endowing Mexico with both a textual tangibility and a palpable past" (ibid. 20). Craib refers to these activities as "state fixations" which he defines as "federal obsessions with permanence" (ibid. 52). However, while cartographic products may have seemed to be unified, they hid the fragmentary nature of the process of their construction in which specific interactions between state

agents and local inhabitants of the land to be mapped and codified influenced the creation of these products (ibid. 15). Craib coins the term "fugitive landscapes" to describe the resistance of the local to the nationalist project (ibid. 12).

Alonso studies the ways in which a mestizo/hybrid ethnic identity was created by Mexican nationalists through a process of what she terms "aesthetic statism" (2004: 460). After Independence, she argues, the state wrested control from the Church so that public images could be created which would inspire appropriate nationalist sentiments in the citizens of the new republic (ibid. 467). She writes of the commemorative monuments and statues that were placed along the Paseo de la Reforma as "an education in social memory" (ibid. 462), which created a linear historiography the nation as extending backwards in time to the prehispanic past, privileging the Aztecs as the spiritual forefathers of the *patria* and linking heroes such as Cuauhtémoc with later members of the civic pantheon: Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos and Benito Juárez. According to the author, the National Museum of Anthropology and History is one of the most important representations of Mexico's linear nationalist history due, in part, to its spatial organization (prehispanic cultures on the ground floor, the "roots" of the modern nation) and ethnographic exhibits on the second floor which allude to modern indigenous groups. Alonso also refers to the museum's dedication plaque, which features the familiar emblem of the eagle perched on a cactus with a serpent in its mouth, a symbol which "territorializes the contemporary nation, rooting it in the time and space of the primordial inhabitants of Mexico's center" (ibid. 475). These spaces organize a particular temporal and geographical vision which emphasizes Mexico City's preeminence as the center (and source) of the nation, and the Aztecs who once resided there as the spiritual force which gives it its cultural shape.

However, the subjects of the nation are not passive receptors of these representations. One of the central ideas in this dissertation is that the relationships between local places and the state, are constructed, interpreted and refashioned through historical narrative and commemoration. On the one hand, it is clear that the nation needs local places to justify its very existence. This assertion is also important for local historical claims, particularly in the context of northern Guerrero: "Many important events in history happened here; the nation would not exist without us." One tale I heard several times illustrates this discursive construction of the nation from the perspective of the local. This local story expands the well-known Aztec origin myth represented on the National Museum of Anthropology and History's dedication plaque as well as on the Mexican flag. Telolopenses tell me, "the eagle actually flew over Teloloapan, first, but when it started to land, a *señora* shooed it away." Teloloapan should have been Tenochtitlan (and by extension, Mexico City). I have heard this same story in reference to other places in Guerrero, and other versions have been reported for the Huasteca Potosina (Lomnitz-Adler 1992: 48) and Jalisco (Stack 2006: 434), both of which are marginal locations relative to Mexico's center. The tale of the eagle that flew away provides a starting point in the examination of the relationships between center and periphery in terms of a wide range of social, political, geographic, economic and discursive formulations.

Various authors have concerned themselves with the participation of a variety of social actors in the complex relations between the "center" and the "periphery," whose discourse and practice complicate a straightforward, top-down construction of the nation by an intellectual elite. In framing this discussion within the context of Mexican historical and cultural production, I follow the path laid out by Claudio Lomnitz-Adler in his work on the construction of local and regional discourse within Mexico's national space

(1992). Writing against the intellectualist construction of *mexicanidad* from the perspective of the nation's center, Lomnitz-Alder argues that the production of cultural meaning is a complex process that occurs within diverse geographical and discursive spaces and urges us to consider the study of regional culture as an alternative to a focus on official historiography and other forms of meaning-making. Lomnitz constructs his analysis of culture and ideology in Mexico through the lens of two regional contexts: the Huasteca and Morelos, each with a particular relationship to the country's capital and official history.

Alonso has also elaborated upon the relationship between official and local discourses, claiming that representations of the past create "effects of truth and…transform partiality into totality" (1988: 35). History may therefore be a discourse that misrepresents in order to convince citizens of its truthfulness and reality. She argues that, in Mexico, "sites of production of a national past are monopolized by the state" (ibid. 42). As an example, she cites the Museum of the Revolution in Chihuahua, which presents the civil war of 1910-1920 in which it is estimated that one million citizens were killed, as a unified national experience. The museum "rehabilitates" revolutionary characters like Pancho Villa, a bandit and general who is revered in the popular imagination, but had a complex relationship with the Mexican state, during and after the Revolution. Villa and other historical figures have been sanitized and simplified in order to fit into the hegemonic national ideology. The parts of history which cannot be resignified by the State are omitted, part of the project of forgetting those aspects of the past that do not fit in with the present historical moment.

In the wake of these works, other authors have begun to discuss the complexities involved in local uses of culture and history in Mexico. Trevor Stack, for example, writes about the ways in which history is conceptualized in western Mexico as a resource, a

"particular kind of knowledge" over which certain people may have mastery (2006: 427). The citizens of Atacco, a small town in Jalisco, distinguish between "culture" and "politics." The defense and promotion of culture, say local intellectuals, is undertaken for the public good, with an eye to the future, unlike politics, in which "personal interests" overrule the more lofty motives of the cultural promotion. Knowing history is having culture. History, conceived as a "definitive account" of the past (ibid. 439), is also viewed as "good business," a local resource capable of improving the town's quality of life by drawing attention to it by state and national politicians. This account may be difficult to create when the sources which are considered authoritative in the genre of historiography are missing or partial. Stack writes that local intellectuals consider two sources to be of primary importance in the justification of the importance of local history: a group of barely visible mounds and an indecipherable colonial document. In this case, the sources are mute and make it difficult to interest state officials in local history. But according to Stack, local history also "thrives in channels beyond the state, including conversations, manuscripts circulated privately, public talks, local publications, history workshops, tourism brochures, and Internet discussion threads and websites" (ibid. 436).

Local history as intimately tied to place is also the focus of Elizabeth Emma Ferry's work on the uses of history as patrimony in Guanajuato. Taking up the long-standing discussion that has surrounding the relationship of memory to history, Ferry argues that history and memory should be seen as alienable and inalienable forms of wealth. In this context, Ferry makes a claim for a local distinction between memory as inalienable: the process by which Guanajuatenses imbue the local (geographical and historical) with meaning and value; and history as alienable: a form of narrating the past which is largely intended for consumption by outsiders and is inscribed in public places and the media. The concept of patrimony has been expanded from its original economic

sense to include all material traces of the past. In the Guanajuatense imaginary, patrimony continues to be located "beneath" the city, underground, in the labyrinth of mine tunnels, the belief in the existence of a hidden enchanted city, and in the bones of dead Guanajuatenses buried in the cemetery or in the mines themselves, in the case of mineworkers who gave their lives in the construction of the tunnels (2006: 311). Outsiders come to Guanajuato to visit these underground places in which, according to Ferry, memory is sold as history and then reconverted into new memories for tourists (ibid. 319).

The use of the past as "patrimony" and the search for "definitive accounts" of the past play a part in what Benjamin Feinberg calls the "linear imagination of the nation" (2003: 15), a vision in which the world is seen from above (or the center). The narratives constructed from this perspective are supposedly neutral and objective, and draw a distinction between "high" and "low" cultural expressions (ibid. 16). In the Sierra Mazateca of Oaxaca, these narratives tend to be associated with outsiders and intermediaries, who move between local and supralocal spaces. The peasants and marginalized members of society often use what Feinberg, following Volosinov, terms a "pictorial style" of imagining culture which relies on reported speech (ibid.). This genre of discourse, which Feinberg characterizes as elusive and multiform, emerges from border spaces, stresses interconnections and movement, and draws its authority from the "agency of the reported voice" (ibid. 18). The pictorial style of imagining culture represents an alternative to the linear style, although it is not necessarily resistive to it. Rather, "alternative" histories and "fugitive landscapes" emerge to challenge other "alternative" histories and "fugitive landscapes," and both destabilize nationalist historiography as, at the same time, they rely on the linear histories to which Feinberg refers and on outside validation of their claims to truth. What emerges is a historiographic

double-bind, in which the local challenges the conclusions of the national but requires national conventions for its own authority. The complex interplay between history and memory comes sharply to the forefront.

Places

Commemorative performances transform the ghostly "space" of the nation into concrete "centers of felt value" (Tuan 1977: 136). There are three interrelated premises that underlie my use of place as an organizing theme. First, place is never empty, but always imbued with significance (Lefebvre 1984 [1973]). Second, like history, voice, and other theoretical constructions, place is not monolithic (Rodman 1992). Third, place is both constituted by and constitutive of cultural practice (Dear 1997: 56).

Space is a category that has often been constructed as prior to experience, a "natural" entity that can easily be co-opted by both hegemonic and counterhegemonic forces (Natter and Jones 1997: 145). Like time, space may be viewed as a kind of blank page to be written upon by social actors. But space is not simply a void to be filled. It is produced through actions and discourses by those who live in particular places; "it arises from purposeful social practice" (Soja 1989: 24). Place is not only not empty, it is not innocent, devoid of political significance. As Soja argues, "we must be insistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relationships of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology" (ibid. 6). At the same time, senses of place go beyond politics and ideology (Cresswell 1996: 13). Although, as Duncan and Ley warn, "topography is...a science of domination—confirming boundaries, securing norms and treating questionable social conventions as unquestioned social facts" (1993:

1), narratives and mimetic acts are never complete. There is necessarily a gap between experience and its signs.

As a conjuncture of text and affect, place is not bound to a particular location on the ground. It may be, as Rodman suggests, "multilocalic" (1992: 641). In different contexts, the concept of "my place" may be conceived of as the town of Teloloapan (the Tecampana, the devils of the fiestas patrias), the municipality of Teloloapan (the Abrazo de Acatempan), the Aldama district (the festival of Cuauhtemoc), the state of Guerrero (political elections), the country of Mexico (the fiestas patrias and other civic celebrations), the Americas more generally (rooting for Brazil against France in the World Cup). Certain practices, like the fiestas patrias, may evoke senses of place at various levels. In addition, Teloloapenses are located in diverse physical places; many migrate to larger cities like Iguala, Chilpancingo or Mexico City, or immigrate to the United States to find work. Place may be represented in terms of images of stability, rootedness, and continuity, but it may also depend on "images of break, rupture, and disjunction" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 33).

Finally, Teloloapan as a place is produced as particular spaces within the region are occupied and narrativized through commemorative practice, mapping, visual imagery, and political and personal narratives. However, it is important to realize that the relationship between place and society is a dialectical one. The practices and discourses mentioned above produce place as an affective locus of localized meaning, but are also produced by it.

DEATH AND THE DEVIL: THE *UNHEIMLICH* IN NORTHERN GUERRERO

Like many anthropologists currently working in Latin America, I realized early in my research that I needed to pay much more attention to the unfixed, the hidden, the uncanny and the buried (Feinberg 2003, Weismantel 2001). This is especially salient in terms of the way in which attention to visible objects like tables, monuments, documents and bones (material proof that the local is vital to the national) is paired with mention of absences, in the form of devils, hidden documents, buried treasure, ghosts, in a series of discourses that express the understanding that the social contract is somehow unfulfilled in the marginalized spaces of the province, Guerrero in particular.

In contrast to the disembodied openness and apparent availability of official historical discourse, local historiography seems to lend itself to secrecy, to the underground, to the repressed, to all that which has been left out of the historical record in the name of scientific objectivity or political expediency. Freud's conception of the *unheimlich*, or uncanny, speaks to the issue of loss, absence, the phantasmagorical and the "return of the repressed" which are invoked in this historical poetics (1919).

Freud contrasts the term *unheimlich* with its opposite, *heimlich*, a concept equated with: the home, the familiar, the docile, intimate, confidential, and domesticated. It is the opposite of the savage, evokes well-being, calm and comfort, linked by the Brothers Grimm to the homeland, or *patria*. *Unheimlich*, then, refers to a particular structure of feeling in which what is most familiar is invaded by the furtive, the clandestine, the mysterious, the hidden, the sinister or secret. History and geography, seen from the margins of the state, are uncanny.

Time and time again, I hear stories of buried treasure that is guarded by supernatural forces, ghostly markets that appear at certain times and may disappear while you are inside, unexcavated ruins that point to the grandeur of the past (a critique of

perceived government neglect), a hidden city underneath the city, documents hidden within monuments, a missing table…all objects which point to the real, the authentic, but can never be grasped, just as social, political and economic well-being always seems to be just out of reach in Guerrero. The uncanny becomes a critical discourse on social relations.

Writing about Nuevo León, Marie Therese Hernández is also caught up in the ubiquity of secret and underground narratives as fundamental elements of the local historical imaginary. She evokes stories of *conversos*, vanished Indians, women buried in walls, and a secret underground city hidden underneath urban Monterrey and concludes by reminding us that "what is repressed always returns" (2002: 276).

The imaginary of "underground" is pervasive in the Sierra Mazateca as well. Feinberg reports that for prehispanic Mexicans, caves were viewed as portals where communication with the other world was made possible. They were also important symbolically as places of origin and connected to holy mountains, "places in the center of the universe that mark the vertical axis in the Mesoamerican view of space, where Earth rises up to the layers above just as the cave descends to the world below" (196). In contemporary Mexico, caves and mountains are "often connected to Earth Lords and other supernatural beings that can provide wealth" (197). This connection give rise to narratives about the Devil who may be a source for magical wealth which he grants through the mechanism of pacts which bind those who deal with him to his service after their deaths. Although this wealth may be connected with capitalist commodity exchange and associated with immoral and anti-community behavior, as Taussig (1980) argues, Feinberg is careful to analyze narratives of the supernatural as multivocal symbols, declaring that

> Not only does the significance of these sites, figures, and domains change over time…but they are given different meanings by different sorts of local actors; they do not homogeneously express a resistance to external power, wealth, and influence that is based on a commonly held and understood local identity (198).

Caves, as borders between worlds and sites of interaction between different kinds of agents, provide narrators a means to comment upon "relationships across morally charged borders" (ibid.) in the mode he characterizes as pictorial. These relationships revolve around notions of the local and the national, people from the Sierra Mazateca and outsiders, relationships which are not stable and unchanging, but require critical constant interpretation (207).

Death and devils, I find, are at the center of all of this. Certainly, the time I spent "in the field" involved in death rituals steered my thoughts in this direction, but it also became obvious to me that death is also at the heart of much commemorative practice, particularly in the context of nationalism. Death seemed to be everywhere in my research: the bones of Cuauhtémoc, revered in Ixcateopan (and not "repatriated"); the martyrdom of almost all of Mexico's national heroes, including Iturbide and Guerrero; the somber ending of the celebration of what I have termed "alternative fiestas patrias" (which conclude with the death of Hidalgo and his compatriots, whose "bodies" are treated much like the bodies of local dead); the death of Don Fidel and all that followed. As Lomnitz writes, one of the reasons for Mexico's "special relationship with death" is the fact that the nation has been constructed on the bones of "an entire cemetery of *caudillos*, who, many times, died at each others' hands. The construction of a national pantheon inhabited by mortal enemies who represent alternative national projects is one of the particularities of the Mexican case" (2006: 40). And of course, Death and the Devil (as ruler of one of the realms of the dead) are intimately intertwined. Both are involved in the kind of mimetic excess that spills over the boundaries of official discourse, allowing for the

"return of the repressed" that is inescapable in popular cultural production. Both are also implicated in concepts of the wild, the savage, the stranger: "others" which are transformed and controlled in nationalist historiography (de Certeau 2000: 25) but escape the bounds of hegemonic definition by participating in local commemoration in unlikely ways. In northern Guerrero, *diablos*, *machos*, *broncos* and *indios* are the local expressions of these savage others.

As it turned out, the Devil became a useful guide to the intricacies of the structure of feeling that emerges from social inequality and marginalization within a nation constituted through geographic and historical discourse. The Devil would appear for the first time on the stage of Mexican history during the Conquest, and reappear, sometimes unexpectedly, in every subsequent historical period. The trope of the devil has been, for me as for Guerrerenses, a means of discussing geopolitics, cultural resistance, and the construction of gender and ethnicity, among other topics.

I am by no means the first anthropologist to draw attention to the fact that the Devil has been a recurring image in many historical contexts (see Taussig 1977, Nash 1979, Crain, 1991, Edelman 1994, Miles 1994, Limón 1994, Nugent 1996, Weismantel 2001, Feinberg 2003, Gordillo 2004). As they say in Mexico, "*más sabe el Diablo por viejo que por Diablo*" (The Devil knows more because he is old than because he is the Devil). But what has caused the surge in anthropological interest in these stories in the past thirty years? To paraphrase Lévi-Strauss, devils are good to think with. For anthropologists raised (personally and professionally) in the Occidental religious and philosophical tradition, the Devil provides a ready-made symbol for otherness. We are drawn to the logic of the Devil as a creative means of defining and resisting colonialism, capitalism, imperialism, mercantilism, etc. For many of us, ethnography is a way for us to tell Devil stories, a form of making the sign of the cross to ward off the demon: what we

are nostalgically tend to perceive as culture-numbing globalization and the disappearance of a simpler way of life.

Yet the attraction the Devil holds for us is not so simple. We see ourselves in him. He is that trickster figure that Crapanzano (1986) prefers to imagine as Hermes, although Mephistopheles might be a more apt metaphor, given anthropology's historical complicity in the colonialist enterprise. I will return to the figure of the Devil throughout these chapters. Indeed, he serves as a kind of guide as I try to make sense of the complex interplay of desire and denial that seems to characterize the geographic, ethnic and gendered discourse of selves and others in southern Mexico.

PLAN OF THE DISSERTATION

In the first few chapters of this dissertation, I present the three of the tropes that have historically been important elements in the construction of social relationships in Mexico, specifically in Guerrero: the figures of the Diablo and the Macho, and the discourse of Guerrero Bronco. Rather than analyze these images as representative of the "reality" behind the Telolopanese devil, I discuss them as discursive practices that inform and are informed by the practice of the devil-masking contest in order to explore (borrowing from Geertz and Weber) the discursive web in which the Teloloapense diablo is both spinning spider and trapped fly. In these chapters, I examine the cultural silk from which the web is spun, and then analyze the practices and performances in which the discourses are embedded, keeping in mind that discourse is an act; "it does not reflect a situation, it *is* a situation" (Stewart 1991: 397). I focus on the ways in which the fiestas patrias are celebrated in Telolopan and surrounding towns: in this region, local events take center stage, in contrast to typical celebrations of the Grito de Independencia, which

have traditionally served as a means of justifying centralized state power through their focus on hegemonic nationalist historiography (see Friedlander 1977: 156).

In chapter one, I focus on the image of the *Diablo*, his tropic history and the local oral, performance and material traditions involved in the devil-masking contest that give the Teloloapense celebration of the fiestas patrias its particular identity. The major themes of this chapter are nostalgia and memory as they are channeled through the recollections of various participants in the diablo tradition.

According to historian Steve Stern, Mexico is the Latin American country in which "archetypes of masculinity and femininity are most intensely interwoven with mythologies of national self-definition" (1995: 20). In chapter two, I begin with the trope of the *Macho*, then turn to the construction of gendered bodies in performance. Performing as a devil brings "the nation" into the body, providing young (and not-so-young) men with a way to perform masculinity in a manner that is perceived to be both essentially Mexican and particularly Guerrerense. Women, who have not traditionally been allowed to perform as devils, participate as contestants for the title of Queen of the Fiestas Patrias, which give them a chance to highlight what are considered typically feminine attributes.

But performance may also allow participants in the fiestas patrias to play with gender categories, contesting and reformulating their validity. Critiquing the essentialization of gender roles, I invoke Judith Butler's combination of gender and performance theory as well as work on masking in order to examine Teloloapense masculinities and femininities as they are expressed in the fiestas patrias. I conclude with an analysis of recent changes in gender performances, both inside and outside the festival.

In chapter three, I take up the trope of *Guerrero bronco*. I use this trope to analyze the existence of a cycle of alternative fiestas patrias in the region around Telolopan, then

move to a discussion of the relationship between the fiestas patrias and the national geo-political imaginary. I argue that the celebration of the fiestas patrias is a means of anchoring national history, grounding "the nation" in a particular place. With their emphasis on the local, the diablos and other forms of local commemoration pull away at the glory of the state and the national struggle for independence. They bring the nation into the body, and in "demonizing" the national, they reduce its power, celebrating the patria grande, but from the point of view of the patria chica. Simultaneously, they rely on the world outside of the locality to endow them with legitimacy.

This tension between the local and the national, and the ambivalence it creates in individual citizens of local places, is the essence of commemoration. In chapter four, I focus on another commemoration, the Abrazo of Acatempan, borrowing from Bakhtin to argue that commemorations are a species of corporeal chronotope, linking space and time in performance, and creating a local identity that both celebrates and contests "mexicanness." Both the Abrazo and the subject of chapter five, the Festival of Cuauhtémoc in Ixcateopan, are based on notions of "what really happened" in the past. Historians argue about when and where the Abrazo between Vicente Guerrero and Agustín de Iturbide took place, and whether it took place at all. And the controversy over whether the bones "discovered" by Eulalia Guzmán in Ixcateopan in 1949 really are those of Cuauhtémoc continues, although most historians believe they are the basis of an elaborate hoax. However, local Acatempenses and Ixcateopenses do not doubt the authenticity of their traditions, and the performances that ground them continue to serve as counter hegemonic historiographies. The festival of Cuauhtémoc, as an event that has come to transcend national boundaries, also provides a space for discussing the relation between the local, the national and the global through a fourth trope: the imaginary of the "Indian," a figure that has both defined *mexicanidad* and defied the State's attempt to

bring "progress" to the country. This figure also brings into play popular concepts of blood, culture, and authenticity, presenting a focus for nostalgic yearnings for a vanished past in the face of the perceived threat of a homogenizing modernity.[20]

In chapter six, I turn from large-scale, public commemorative performances to the family-level practices in which loved ones are remembered during what is commonly known as the Días de los Muertos. In Teloloapan, the "Days of the Dead" are generally referred to as the *ofrendas*, or offerings, a way of speaking that highlights the importance of material exchanges that accompany these occasions. The celebration of the ofrendas in Teloloapan is a means of marking loss, employing objects that invoke memories in both the producers and consumers of the offering. Ofrendas convert the trajectory of an individual's life history into a kind of spectacle to be consumed by an audience that may include family members, a more general public, and the spirit of the difunto being honored. The Teloloapense ofrenda plays with notions of time and space; combining media and mixing scales. The ofrenda, as a practice or performance, produces a place densely populated with objects and emotions that call to the spirit of the dead to return and enjoy the flavors of life. At the same time, ofrendas call to those living family members who are far away to return and participate in one of the practices that define what it means to be Teloloapense. And, even as ofrendas commemorate the lives of Teloloapense *difuntos*, they also participate in Christian historiography by including representations drawn from a repertory of Biblical scenes.

All of this takes place within a nostalgic, nationalist discourse that defines the Days of the Dead as a tradition that is constantly being threatened by outside forces,

[20] As JoAnn Martin argues, there are two characteristics of the discourse of "authenticity" which are pertinent to this study. "First, the fact that discourses of authenticity emerge in settings where we are least likely to find the 'pure forms' implied by the term; and secondly, that one finds a dimension of performance associated with activities and objects viewed as authentic" (1993: 2).

particularly the American holiday of Halloween. In Teloloapan there are those who feel that the ofrendas will eventually be wiped out by foreign customs, and that the Halloween devils whose costumes are sold in the marketplace are "gringo devils, not our traditional devils." But for now at least, the two traditions continue to exist side by side, and it is not uncommon to see children in witch or ghost costumes visiting the ofrendas with their parents and singing for their *calaveras* (the equivalent of trick or treating) in local stores and stalls in the market that is set up only at this time for vendors of the candles, flowers, and breads that are essential to an ofrenda. But more than anything, the practices and objects that constitute the ofrendas are meaning-saturated spaces, biotopographies that evoke memories and manage grief. Concluding, I return to questions of reflexivity, power, and the practice of anthropology, ending, as I began, with the figure of the Devil.

Chapter 1. The Traditional Diablos of Teloloapan

> The only thing I can tell you is that, a long time ago, in conversations, because I haven't read any books about this, and the truth is that day by day they put different things in History, but from what they tell me, before the thing with the diablos started because the fathers of the young women were very suspicious, right? And well, they took very good care of their daughters, right? And that they had a way on the 15th of September so that various [young men] could get disguised [as diablos]. And in that way, they took the young women flowers, because even now, the diablos cut flowers and give them to the girls, no? And that was a way to be able to, to conquer, to get close to the girls, the diablos. That, that is what they told me, no? But more concretely, that I could tell you "this, this," well, no. There's another version as well, that says that in the Revolution, for example, near Ixcapuzalco, they dressed as diablos to attack the enemy and apart from their weapons, they made an impression with their masks. And there were quite a few triumphs by means of the masks. That was since the Conquest, right? From our continent well, the Aztecs put on that kind of disguise, and apart from the weapons, which didn't give them much of an advantage, they had quite a few triumphs because of their masks, and of course, they didn't know who was behind the mask, and there was [the sound of] "ho ho ho" and that kind of thing. These are the only things that I can tell you (Don Mateo, *mascarero* and contemporary of Don Fidel, in 1999).[21]

[21] Y de aquí lo único que puedo decirle pues de hace mucho tiempo, en pláticas porque yo no he leído libros así que me entere, y de hecho, de día en día van poniendo diferentes cosas en la historia, pero según lo que a mí me cuentan, que antes, comenzó la cosa de los diablos porque los papás de las muchachas eran bastante delicados, ¿verdad? Para que un muchacho pues ahora sí, se declarara a una muchacha, ¿sí? Y que pues, cuidaban mucho a sus hijas los papás, ¿verdad? Y que hubo una forma de en un 15 de septiembre, se vistieron varios. Y de esa manera, les llevaba flores, porque hasta la fecha, los diablos cortan flores por ahí, y a las muchachas, les regalan así flores, ¿no? Y que fue un medio para poder, para poder conquistar, para poder acercar a las muchachas, esto de los diablos. Eso, eso es lo que, lo que me contaron pues a mí, ¿no? Pero yo a fondo que yo les puedo decir 'esto, esto, esto' pues no. También había la otra versión de que en la Revolución, por ejemplo, por Ixcapuzalco, se vestían para atacar al enemigo y aparte de las armas los impresionaban con las máscaras. Y que hubo bastantes triunfos por medio de esa, ese medio de la máscara. Eso era que en la Conquista, ¿verdad? De nuestro continente pues, los Aztecas pusieron ese tipo de disfraz, y aparte de las armas de poca ventaja como las que tenían ellos, pero aun así, hubo bastantes triunfos, que los impresionaban con la máscara y este, por cierto pues, no sabían quien era él que portaba una máscara, y también era eso de 'ho ho ho' y ese tipo de cosa. Esas son las únicas cosas que les puedo decir.

Who is the Teloloapense diablo? He is a slippery character, partaking of multiple discourses: colonialist, machista, Catholic, nationalist, popular, and indigenous. Neither self nor other, human or animal, sacred nor profane, he is at the same time implicated in all of these things. A carnivalesque being, both discursively and aesthetically, the horns, teeth, carved animal bodies and faces, claws that jut abruptly out of his head are paralleled by the multiple contradictions that define his history as a signifier of social relations in Mexico. He is implicated in popular images of the Christian Devil who, with his phallic horns and pointy tail, evokes aggressive male sexuality, and whose antisocial ethic alienates men from their communities, luring them with promises of riches in exchange for their souls.

He arises out of the attribution of this Christian Devil to ethnic and geographical "others" by urban Spanish and mestizo populations and out of the appropriation of the devil by marginalized groups who have, at different historical moments, claimed the devil as a self-image in order to resist Spanish domination. The Devil-as-macho also forms part of the phantasmagorical concept of "Guerrero Bronco," a national myth which categorizes Guerrerenses as wild, unmanageable, violent, and uncivilized, symbolically defining the political and economic relations between the state and the State, center and margin, justifying both federal military presence and systematic neglect, and campesino and indigenous guerrilla activity.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVIL IN LATIN AMERICA

> It is to be feared in these Indians, that, since these idolatries have not been completely erased, they combine with Christian faith something of the cult of the Demon" (Fray Diego Durán, in Báez-Jorge, p. 293).

> The Devil does not sleep, nor has he forgotten the offerings that these Indians… made to him in the past, and…he is waiting comfortably to return to his lost domain" (Fray Bernadino de Sahagún, in Báez-Jorge p. 284).
>
> This land was Hell relocated (Fray Toribio de Benavente, known as Motolinía, in Báez Jorge, p. 292).

The religions of prehispanic Mexico were open and polytheistic belief systems in which "Good" and "Evil" were imagined as inseparable parts of the power which animated the human and non-human universe rather than moral absolutes represented in separate divinities. For indigenous Mexicans before the conquest, evil and good were inseparable, and the powers of creation and destruction were intertwined. The Nahuatl word *teotl*, which would later be translated as "god," was used to identify beings with both divine and "demonic" attributes.[22]

The clash between selves and others that was the necessary context of the conquest of New Spain in the sixteenth century involved a series of imputations and appropriations on the part of the colonizing Spaniards and the colonized (and newly defined) Mexicans. Gruzinski argues that the first years after the "discovery" of the New World were characterized by chroniclers' efforts to understand the natives' world view. Columbus, he states, started off as a cuasi-ethnographer, who attempted to describe the customs and beliefs of the Caribbean peoples he encountered. He goes on to cite Pedro Mártir, a Milanese priest who became fascinated with the Taínos' figurative objects, including masks made of cotton "imitating the painted specters they claimed to see at night" (1994: 24). Mártir associated these *zemíes* with the images painted by European artists depicting the phantasms and specters that sometimes escaped from purgatory. However, the uncanniness of the "unquiet and fugitive shades" (ibid. 27) soon gave way to more categorical images of the diabolic and the monstrous, particularly after the 1521

[22] See Báez-Jorge 2003 for a discussion of prehispanic religion and moral philosophy.

conquest of Mexico. Sixteenth-century chronicler Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo writes of

> …the abominable figure of the devil [which is] in many and diverse ways painted and sculpted, with may heads and deformities and frightening canines…great fangs and disproportioned ears, with the fiery eyes of dragons and fierce serpents (ibid. 29).

After having decided that the inhabitants of the New World were in fact human (a decision that involved a great deal of debate), European thinkers were faced with the task of fitting these new beings into their cosmic scheme. Some saw them as "noble savages" who could teach Europe about the ideal social contract, while others saw them as bestial primitives who could only benefit by contact with civilized men and ideas. Fernando Cervantes argues that it was this second vision, of wild, diabolic savages, that came to dominate European thought by the second half of the sixteenth century (1994: 8). Before that time, indigenous Americans were discursively linked to the Devil primarily because of their religious ignorance; Catholic clergy and laypeople were confident that the Indians only worshipped their gods because of religious ignorance and that it was only a matter of time until they were converted to the true faith. Early Franciscans, for example, used *pastorelas* and other theatrical representations of the battle between Lucifer and Saint Michael in order convert the pagans and teach them the basic precepts of Christianity; these plays were then often followed by mass baptisms that took advantage of both native and Spanish belief in the magical power of the sacraments.

The Devil became a defining figure in the discourse of otherness created by Spaniards as a means of knowing/understanding the Indians they were forcibly incorporating into the European universe.[23] The image of the Devil had been employed in other contexts, notably during the reconquest of Spain from the Moors, and the expulsion

[23] See Klor de Alva (1997) for a discussion of Nahua and European discourses of the "other."

of the Jews from Spain in 1492, coincidentally, the year Columbus landed on Hispaniola. Moors and the Jews served as "others" against which the Spanish people could be defined, and the devil was invoked in connection with both groups (Gutiérrez 1993: 324).[24] After 1521, the triad of Devil, Jew and Moor became associated with the new others: the Indians of America. Filled with references to the "recognizably exotic" (Baudot 1992: 104), early descriptions written by the conquistadors emphasized the similarities between mosques and Mexican temples. Along with the plays that taught the values of Christianity, Spaniards staged representations of battles between Moors and Christians in which the Moors were identified with the conquered Indians.[25] Establishing a link between native Mexicans and Jews as a means of situating the newly "discovered" people in universal, biblical history, some Spanish theologians identified Native Americans as the descendents of the lost tribes of Israel (Gutiérrez 1993: 365).[26] The elaboration by the Spaniards of a series of codes by which to understand the Indians continued throughout the colonial period, although the codes underwent certain changes as the relationship between the two groups solidified.

For some time after the Conquest, many evangelists, recognizing certain similarities between Catholic and prehispanic religion (such as the practice of fasting), espoused the belief that God had already manifest himself to the Mexicans, although their faith had become corrupted through ignorance (Lafaye 1974). But as time went on, and

[24] Gutiérrez argues that, for the Spanish, the Moors functioned as political "others," while the Jews were considered "other" in religious terms (1993: 324).

[25] Numerous variants of the *Danza de Moros y Cristianos* are performed all over Mexico. In many cases, the connection between Indians and Moors has been subverted, and the dancers have come to identify themselves with the Spanish soldiers lead by Santiago on his horse (see Warman 1972, Friedlander 1975).

[26] The figure of the Jew is still present in Mexican popular culture, particularly in dances and material culture representations. Other "others," specific to the Mexican context, included the Chichimecas who inhabited Mexico's northern regions. These Indians were seen as especially resistant to domination, since the days of the Aztec empire; they were "Other," even to other Mexican Indians. They were considered by many to be especially proficient in manipulating the devil for their own and others' gain (Cervantes 1994: 91).

"idolatrous" practices were evidently still widespread, the friars began to question the sincerity of indigenous conversion, and their optimism turned to anxiety about the devil's relationship with the indigenous gods. This experience, combined with the changes in theology that were taking place in Europe (changes influenced by what the Church was facing in the New World), led many religious thinkers to conclude that indigenous religious practices were inspired, not by God, but by his cosmic adversary, the Devil.[27] Eventually, through a process of resignification and rehierarchization, the prehispanic gods became firmly identified with the Christian Devil. This was particularly the case for the indigenous deities Mictlantecuhtli and Tezcatlipoca, who had been associated in Aztec thought with death, darkness and the underworld (Báez-Jorge 2003: 267-8). Those who invoked these demons were identified as sorcerers and devil-worshippers (Parker 1993: 20-21). Yet for indigenous Mexicans, the idea of a totally good god was absurd, as he or she would be only half as powerful as a god who was both creator and destroyer (Cervantes 1994: 42). When the friars continued to insist that the Devil was evil, to be feared and shunned, the Indians began to see in him the possibility of a powerful ally, yet another deity to be worshipped.

This tendency was particularly evident in the friars' insistence that the Devil was the object of the human sacrifices they so abhorred, practices which were vital to the Indians' understanding of the relationship between gods and humans. As Cervantes writes, "by insisting that the evil was the central object of the sacrifices, the friars were making it difficult for their neophytes to conceive of him as an enemy. They were in fact encouraging a tendency where the Indians could willingly have contributed to their own demonization" (1994: 47). This "demonic ethos" would continue throughout the colonial

[27] José de Acosta, an influential Spanish theologist who wrote extensively about the indigenous people of New Spain, saw the devil as the ultimate imitator. His desire to imitate God is the basis of idolatry, and the root of the similarities between Catholic and prehispanic religious practice (Cervantes 1994: 29).

period and even later, especially in peripheral areas (like Guerrero) where Spanish influence was not very strong (ibid. 49). However, it is important to note that, despite the friars' fears, religious practice was not simply the continuation of unadulterated prehispanic belief. Even when religious rebels opposed Christianity by allying themselves with the Devil, they did so in Christian terms.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the importance of prehispanic deities had greatly decreased. As Mexican Catholicism began to take form, a clearer concept of the distinction between good and evil emerged, and the image of the Devil began to take on new significances (ibid. 56). Since the early colonial period, many chroniclers had linked indigenous resistance to Spanish domination with demonic intervention. According to Oviedo, Gómara and Clavijero, the Devil urged the Mexicas to resist the Spaniards during the Battle of Tenochtitlan. Referring to events that took place later in the sixteenth century, Grijalva wrote that the Devil had appeared to a group of Yaquis, advising them to kill missionaries and burn their churches (Weckman 1992: 166). But the discourse of the demonic could just as easily be used against the Spaniards. In order to justify their rebellions against the established church, some indigenous leaders attributed demonic qualities to Spanish Catholic officials (Cervantes 1994: 71). Some native chroniclers, such as Fernando de Alva Ixtilxóchitl in Mexico and Garcilaso in Peru, omitted any reference to the Devil in writing about the prehispanic past, linking him exclusively to the contamination of Spanish influence, and in this way,

> The oppressed and underprivileged could interpret the conduct of their oppressors as the result of demonic influence....enslavement and exploitation often appear to have inadvertently delivered a special mystical power to the underdog in colonial society. Through their very attempts at suppression, and especially through their persistent identification of heterodox practices with diabolism, the oppressors ironically validated devil-worship itself: they invested the devil with a power that

> the oppressed could appropriate by standing to their oppressors as the devil stood to God (ibid. 78).

This reversal of the common association between the devil and the Indian, based as it was on idea that Church representatives weren't Christian enough in their dealings with Indians (an idea also found in the writings of fray Bartolomé de Las Casas), preshadowed later identifications of the Devil with capitalist corporations and large landowners.

The interpretation of the New Testament which emphasized the link between demonic power and material gain became especially salient after the Bourbon reforms imposed by the Spanish crown in the first half of the eighteenth century. These reforms, which secularized the clergy and expelled many of the religious orders whose members had been the primary liaisons between natives and the Church, greatly contributed to the weakening of the relationship between indigenous Mexicans and official Catholicism (Meyer and Sherman 1995: 278).

Ironically, the figure of the Devil became saturated with meaning in Mexico just as Catholic thinkers began to deemphasize his role in official theology. As MacCormack points out, demons began to lose their "explanatory usefulness" in the Enlightenment, as "reason" came to dominate "imagination" (1993: 121). But popular Mexican Christianity, like popular Christianity at the same time in Europe, had little to do with the philosophical debates that went on in intellectual circles. In Mexico, as in Spain, local religious practice and belief combined "magical" elements with authorized Christian doctrine. This included the belief that the Devil and the saints could be manipulated, enabling believers to fulfill their needs and desires, especially those related to material gain and sexuality.

The medieval Devil that forms the basis for the popular conception of the demonic that would hold sway in colonial, and even contemporary Mexico, was an ambiguous figure. Cervantes traces his presence through court documents of the colonial period, establishing his connection with the world of material objects and the satisfaction of sexual lust. Since the Church itself linked Satan with the material world, he was seen by many as a possible recourse in times of material hardship. In the case of black slaves, individuals may have accused themselves of making pacts with the Devil as a means of getting audiences with the authorities, which they would use to air their grievances over material hardship and mistreatment at the hands of their masters (ibid. 79).

> The Devil was viewed by many colonial Mexicans not so much as a horrible and frightening creature, but as a figure who in times of crisis offered solace, conversation, and the illusion of hope. At times, too, it appeared to people that the Devil listened and responded to their problems more directly and quickly than God, and that the Devil's magic was more efficacious than the magic of the Church (Behar 1987: 44).

The Devil's relationships with male and female followers were markedly different. In her analysis of Inquisition records from colonial Guerrero involving accusations made against mulatto women, Cárdenas notes that pacts with the *Demonio* made by men typically took the form of a contract between equals in which the man would receive material benefits or certain "masculine" abilities such as fighting and seduction in return for his soul. Interestingly, Cervantes mentions an exceptional case in which a woman makes a pact with the devil in exchange for manly attributes.

> So widespread was the devil's reputation as a dispenser of markedly masculine skills that when the mulatto slave Antonia de Noriega escaped from her master disguised as a man, she thought it wise to 'call and invoke the Devil' and, with the help of some herbs, became proficient in bullfights, gambling, and the breaking in of horses; she also became so confident in fights that she even killed many of her opponents (1994: 89).

But in general, women were accused of witchcraft (*hechicería*), in which pacts with the devil were based on a relation of subordination, and included sexual acts and other forms of adoration. These "witches" typically chose to involve themselves with the devil in order to create or strengthen romantic relationships, or to punish wayward lovers and husbands or other women who posed a threat to these relationships (Cárdenas 1997: 29).[28] Pointing to women's attempts to "domesticate" men, using magic to stop their partners from violent behavior, excessive drinking and womanizing, Behar interprets women's pacts with the devil as strategies for redressing the imbalance in sexual relations and the greater freedom accorded to men in the colonial period (1987: 36). In the cases she examines from central Mexico, the lower class women who invoked the Devil saw him as everything their husbands were not: handsome, affectionate, and powerful. She writes, "Women called in the Devil, it seems, as a last resort, when male dominance and the double standard could no longer be reconciled with God and the saints and all the other consolations the Church had to offer" (ibid. 47). For both men and women, the Devil represented a masculine ideal: men appealed to him as a vision of what they themselves could achieve, although at the price of their souls, and women saw in him a means of stabilizing their relationships with male partners.

Cervantes argues that part of the identification of the Devil with assertive masculinity may be due to the fact that, since he is theologically the Christian "Other" to what was seen by many as an "effeminate" Church dominated by the figures of the sexless Christ and the Virgin Mary, he must necessarily be identified with virility and

[28] I have heard various stories about contemporary indigenous and campesino women in Guerrero who "cure" (*curar*) or bewitch their husbands, taking away their ability to seduce other women and turning them into "mandilones" (men ruled by women). One countermeasure is to have the bewitched man drink mezcal into which has been mixed a ground-up scorpion or wasp, symbols of male aggression and potency.

masculinity (1994: 89).[29] This is particularly clear in the testimonies of members of marginalized "herding and riding groups" (like those that populated much of Northern Guerrero in the colonial period; see also Gruzinski 1993: 162). The voices of some of these men come through in archival documents, bragging about how they bargained with the Devil in exchange for their skills in handling horses and livestock (ibid. 91). The Devil himself often appeared as a wealthy Spanish gentleman or criollo charro dressed in elegant riding gear.

> At one time in Teloloapan, there was a rich *ganadero* called Don Cipriano, who owned thousands of head of cattle. Some time after he died, his favorite horse, el Macho Prieto, disappeared. A trusted servant was sent to look for the horse; he was told that if he didn't find the animal within three days, he would pay with his life. He searched and searched, but found nothing. Finally on the road from La Concordia to Teloloapan, he met a *caballero* who, noting his distress, asked him what was wrong. The servant said, "My *patrón* lost his favorite horse, and I'm looking for it. If I don't find it, they'll kill me." The caballero responded, "I know where it is. If you meet me here tomorrow at noon, I'll show you." That night, the servant told his family what had happened, and the next day, he went back and met the strange gentleman. The man asked him to mount his horse behind him. They had to pass through three dangers: fierce bulls, angry goats, and a place filled with snakes. Finally, they arrived at a cave, where they found the missing horse. And in the cave, they saw the deceased Don Cipriano, the servant's old *patrón*. The dead man asked the servant what he was doing in the cave, and the servant explained, repeating that they would kill him if he didn't return the horse. Don Cipriano said, "Take him, and tell my sons that if they want to be rich, they should come and talk to me. Take my scarf as proof that you saw me." When the servant returned home, he told Don Cipriano's sons what he had seen, then quit his job and left the region. No one knows what the sons did with the information, but not long after, all the livestock disappeared. Don Eusebio says he heard the story from the servant himself, who was ninety-six years old at the time (told to me by journalist Eusebio Martínez, paraphrased in my field notes of October, 1999).

[29] However much church officials emphasized the gentle, maternal, chaste Virgin Mary, she had another face, as well. She was often seen as a kind of spiritual general in times of battle: Spaniards carried the image of the Virgin of Remedios with them as they fought the Aztecs, and at the time of Independence, insurgents fought under the banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe. For more on this, see Lafaye 1974.

By the end of the colonial period, the official Church had lost much of its interest in the devil. Acts of heresy and witchcraft that were severely punished in the sixteenth century were almost ignored "in a bureaucracy that increasingly abandoned the challenge of evangelizing the lower classes" (Behar 1987: 45). Nevertheless, the Devil had emerged, not only as the enemy of Christ, granter of wealth and the power to seduce, but as a trickster, a "political opponent" and enemy of the status quo (Cervantes 1994: 93). The power of the demonic had long been recognized as that of disorder, the non-canonical, the non-official (MacCormack 1993: 107). Those Mexicans who felt themselves marginalized saw in him an ally, although not, perhaps, to be entirely trusted.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC DEVIL

To anyone familiar with anthropological literature, it seems that the Devil has been busy in the past few decades. He has appeared in dancehalls in Texas, discotheques in Tijuana, Columbian sugar plantations and Bolivian tin mines, urban Ecuador and rural Costa Rica. In what many consider to be a watershed for these accounts, Michael Taussig writes of pacts made with the Devil in Columbian sugar plantations and Bolivian tin mines (1980; see also Nash 1979), which he interprets as symbolic expressions of the conflict between a traditional communitarian ideology based on use-value and the focus on exchange-value that characterizes the practices and institutions associated with capitalism. Edelman (1994) and Nugent (1996) have criticized Taussig's formulation for oversimplifying the concepts of use and exchange value, for idealizing the precapitalist past, and for failing to recognize the long history of devil pacts that preceded the rise of agrarian capitalism in the Middle Ages. Nugent concludes that in Peru, the demonization of accumulation expressed as pacts with the Devil is the outcome of structural

inequalities. According to Edelman, "in rural Latin America devil-pact stories constitute a significant, nearly ubiquitous cultural matrix through which to express relations of power and exploitation and through which to express a variety of socially conditioned anxieties and psychic conflicts" and that "the Devil is a marvelous metaphor for the conjunction of class and sexual oppression" (60). In the same vein, Crain (1991) writes that, in Ecuador, the Devil is traditionally associated with mercantilism in general, not necessarily capitalist accumulation. She further argues that, as in colonial Mexico, Ecuadorian women's narratives about the Devil function as "off-stage" critiques of class, sexual and interpersonal relations (78-79).

Miles (1994) argues that devil stories in urban Ecuador serve as a means of instilling a work ethic in children in gender-specific ways. Herrera-Sobek (1988) emphasizes the moral and religious aspects of the devil's appearance in Tijuana discotheques, arguing that stories about him force people to confront the problem of evil. Limón (1994) offers a more nuanced analysis of the presence of the devil in South Texas dancehalls, claiming that women and men of different generations interpret these stories in distinct ways. As part of a nostalgic vision of the past, the elderly in Limón's account argue that the devil comes to the dancehall because "things are out of hand"; there is too much drinking, too many drugs. Women go out by themselves. The dancehalls charge too much. Men say that their women talk of having danced with the devil because they are too demanding; they want what they can't have. So the devil shows up to teach them a lesson. The women who tell the stories, reminiscent of colonial Mexican "witches," emphasize their desire for the devil, who presents himself as a wealthy, well-dressed, handsome Anglo, hiding the fact that his feet are actually those of a goat (174). Limón concludes that the devil is "a modernist figure indebted to the past but open and available as a flexible and critical tool for reading and critically evaluating the threatening

present....a multiple and critical reaction to an increasing saturation from the 'outside' by an intensifying culture of postmodernity" (179-80).

Writing of the Sierra Mazateca region of Oaxaca, Benjamin Feinberg argues that stories about devils and other demonic figures linked to caves and underground spaces tend to arise out of encounters with various "outsiders" and "outside forces" and "illustrate the variety of local responses to the 'outsider' presence and illuminate the processes of negotiation of models of cultural difference and the slippery, dark border between us and them" (2003: 194), particularly as a means of critiquing social and economic practices that are viewed as morally questionable. Like Limón, Feinberg emphasizes the multivocality of the devil-figure and the variety of responses it elicits in different members of society with differing relationships with "the outside".

Gaston R. Gordillo (2004) and Mary J. Weismantel (2001) also take up the figure of the Devil (or similar beings) in the context of Latin American social, economic and political history. Gordillo links Toba narratives about devils (*payák*) to specific places in the Argentinean Chaco, arguing that the Toba spatialize memories of exploitation at the hands of plantation owners and other economic elites by speaking of these places as overrun with devils. Different kinds of devils abide in different kinds of places, depending on the kinds of memories associated with them. In the bush, a geographic zone which is neither a traditional home for the Toba nor a place which has been intimately linked to plantations and wage labor, the payák which live there are fearsome, but may engage in a kind of reciprocity with humans, as they are the source of healing power for Toba shamans. The mountain devils, however, are connected to the plantation, and are considered to be "utterly alien and evil beings that caused unparalleled levels of death" (125), an association which refers to the rampant disease that formed a part of the Toba experience on the plantation. Other beings, like the cannibal KiyaGaikpí and the devil

known as *"El Familiar"* are also connected with specific places and memories of exploitation. Stories about El Familiar are similar to those reported by Taussig and Nash, in that he haunts the space of the factory, appears as a well-dressed, educated white man, and engages in pacts with those wishing to accumulate wealth. As part of these pacts, he is often allowed to consume the flesh of hapless workers.

Weismantel analyzes andino narratives of the pishtaco, also called *ñakaq*, a kind of boogeyman who is represented as a vampire like white man who plunders fat from Indian bodies and rapes women. Like the Devil, he is linked to phallic violence, accumulation and power and is associated with caves and underground spaces. Weismantel, like Gordillo and Feinberg, argues that the figure of the pishtaco is one way for indigenous people to remember the history of their exploitation by outsiders, which in this case, may include anthropologists as well as state representatives and foreigners (196). For Weismantel, the pishtaco also represents a negative model of masculinity, which is compared with the figure of the *tatya*, or indigenous providing father. The pishtaco steals fat from Indians (considered to be of higher quality than non-Indian fat), but also attacks the genitals of Indian men (which Weismantel links to both biological and social reproduction). The connection between otherness and the pishtaco underscores a complicated attitude of repulsion and desire that characterizes indigenous feelings about the foreign (221), whose representatives include Franciscan friars, gringo technicians, state representatives and military officers, and even anthropologists. Monks use the stolen Indian fat to grease church bells, gringos use it to lubricate airplane engines and factory equipment, and members of the armed forces use it to pay off the foreign debt and buy weapons. One anthropologist was rumored to have stolen fat with his camera. In most cases, the fat is not consumed, but sold for profit (208).

Teloloapan also has its share of devil stories. When I first arrived, I heard stories about Juan Salgado, a rico who had passed away years before and was said to have obtained his money as the result of a pact he made with the Devil. People saw him walk around and around the zócalo daily, as a penance, they say, for his sins. He died alone, leaving all his money to his servant. In 2001, I read an account in the local newspaper of the following incident: three *delincuentes*—one woman and two men—were turned into the authorities for the attempted kidnapping of a young man from the small town of Tepozonalquillo, municipio of Teloloapan. According to the article, the accused were going to offer the man to "El diablo, el Satanás de la Mina," (The devil, Satan of the Mines) in the mines of Tehuixtla owned by the Mexican-Japanese corporation *"Rey de Plata"* in exchange for continued success in extracting metals. At the time, these mines had brought much attention to Teloloapan, and many local people found jobs as miners. But the pay was poor, and the profits did not remain in Teloloapan, or even in Mexico, according to some. One man assured me that he had heard that Bill Clinton was one of the mine's owners. Although trace amounts of gold, silver, and copper were found, large concentrations of zinc and lead were its principal assets. I also heard rumors that miners brought up tons of gold from the mine, and that the company only said that it extracted zinc to cover up how much money was being made from the sale of the gold. The mine operated in Teloloapan from 1999 until 2001, when it closed, citing the devaluation of the peso against the dollar and a depressed zinc market.[30]

[30] According to the Peñoles Annual Report of 2004, the corporation set up to run the mine had three partners: a Mexican company called Peñoles which owned 51% of the shares, a Japanese company called Dowa Mining, with 39%, and another Japanese company called the Sumitomo Corporation, with 10% of the corporation's actions. The same corporation owns Tizapa, another zinc mine in Guerrero, which has a lower operating cost and continues to function (www.penoles.com.mx, July 28, 2007).

I would argue that encounters with the Devil have always been about encounters with the outside, with the "Other." Moors, Jews or Indians are imagined as demonic by the Spaniards. Moors, Jews, Spaniards, Mestizos and Gringos are imagined as demonic by the Indians. Women imagine men as demonic. Men fear women's association with the Devil. But the issue is somewhat more complicated when the actors involved appropriate the demonic for their own ends. Indians call upon the Devil to help them resist the Spaniards. Women call upon the devil to domesticate (or un-demonize) their men.

The double discourse of the diabolic, which is sometimes about the establishment of boundaries between "us" and "them," sometimes about the negotiation of the relationship between "us" and "them," is what gives rise to the Diablos of Teloloapan. To understand the specific conditions of their emergence, it is necessary to examine the role that the state of Guerrero has played in Mexican history and its place in the national imagination, which I do in chapter three. In the rest of this chapter, I discuss the tradition of the Diablos as one of the most important elements of Teloloapense identity and, more concretely, as the context for an artisanal practice that has defined one Teloloapense family's history for the last half-century.

THE LEGEND OF THE DIABLOS OF TELOLOAPAN

The Devils of the 16th of September

> It is said that it was a true revolutionary event born in the epoch of the insurgency. No one knows the name of the person who had the idea, but it is certain that the southern caudillo Pedro Ascencio de Alquisiras intervened in that dance.
>
> We Mexicans know very well that the historic Grito de Independencia took place in the town of Dolores, and was given by the brave priest don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla in the year 1810.
>
> That historic shout was repeated in Teloloapan by the devils. It is well known that in Guerrero, anything is possible, and so it was that in the middle of combat

the followers of the great caudillo Alquisiras disguised themselves with masks, then went to take the plaza of Teloloapan. We can't give the precise year, but oral tradition tells us that it was a 16th of September that those diabolic monsters made their appearance, a thing that had never been seen in those times. And, as those people were so fearful, when they saw the band of infernal spirits they said that Judgment Day (the end of the world) had arrived.

The devils entered by the main streets of the town, now the city of Teloloapan, then they began to pass through the rest of the avenues and alleys, causing dread in whomever they came across. Upon seeing them, men and boys fled in fear, and some of the women fainted dead away; some commended their souls to God, and others didn't even have time to do that. Shouts of hysteria were heard all over, and those who found themselves at home barricaded themselves inside their houses, reciting whatever prayers they knew and examining their consciences. Soon the little town, instead of smelling of the sulfur that many expected, smelled of incense, blessed palm and perfumed reliquaries. But the fright and the punishment were greater for the rich, who gave the devils everything of valor that they had. The devils distributed part of what they were given among the poor and needy, and the other part they set aside to sustain the struggle they had sworn to uphold to the last moment, cost what it may.

Afterwards, in control of the situation, all of the devils reunited in the public plaza and shouted, "Long live the Revolution! Long live the great priest Hidalgo!" Doing this, they took off their disguises and began to pass through the streets again, but this time in order to invite everyone to celebrate together the happy occurrence. A little while later, the people began to regain their calm. Very soon, word began to pass from mouth to mouth, and people began to leave their hiding places, and when they were gathered together, the mischief came to light. The event has been repeated since that time and is now an amusement in these glorious days of September 15th and 16th, and it will continue to occur while God lends us life, because now some very Teloloapense authorities have celebrated contests in order to award a prize to the best-dressed devil. That is how they continue to promote the tradition.

Friend reader, whenever you like, visit us on the 15th of September; do it but don't be surprised or faint away when you see the devils. The devils of today are inoffensive, entertaining in a good way, seeing them run from one street to another followed by all the children….

The Devils [version 2]

It is said that toward the beginning of the war of Independence, when not all of the Indians understood what it would mean to be independent of their Spanish masters, these [Indians] would kill those who tried to explain why the priest don

Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla had launched himself from the curate of Dolores and had fought the Spanish, making them flee from towns and cities. Here in Teloloapan it was known that in some towns, the people already knew that upon giving the shout of liberty they would no longer be dominated by their masters. Then the Spanish came to scare them, and some Indians who weren't totally submissive, rioted. A *señora* had the idea that they should disguise themselves as lions and tigers and, since they didn't have any weapons, that they should use chicotes in order to make a lot of noise and defend themselves. Since the Spaniards of that time were also very gullible, they were scared of those who were disguised as devils and made such a disturbance cracking their chicotes, and they drew off. The Indians continued to disguise themselves as devils and skeletons, mainly to celebrate the anniversary of the Grito de Dolores, and this practice has been conserved until our times.

Tixtla de Guerrero, July of 1935.
Évila Franco Nájera, Federal Rural Teacher
(quoted in Guzmán 1995: 80-82)[31]

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[31] *Los diablos del 16 de septiembre*
Se dice que fue una verdadera puntada revolucionaria nacida en la época de la insurgencia. No se sabe el nombre de la persona que tuvo la dicha ocurrencia; lo cierto es que la gente del caudillo suriano Pedro Ascencio de Alquisiras intervino en esa danza.
Todos los mexicanos sabemos a fondo que el histórico Grito de Independencia fue en el pueblo de Dolores por el bizarro cura don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla en el año de 1810.
Ese histórico grito se repitió en Teloloapan por los diabos; bien sabido es que en Guerrero se vale de todo, así es que en pleno combate, la gente del gran caudillo Alquisiras se disfrazó con máscaras, luego se dirigieron a tomar la plaza de Teloloapan; sin poder precisar el año, pero la tradición oral nos cuenta que fue un 16 de septiembre que hicieron su aparición dichos monstruos diabólicos cosa jamás visto en aquellos tiempos y, como aquellas gentes eran tan termerosas, que al ver la caterva de espíritus infernales se decían que ya les había llegado el día del juicio final (o sea el fin del mundo).
Los diablos entraron por las principales calles del pueblito hoy ciudad de Teloloapan; luego comenzaron a recorrer las demás avenidas y callejones, causando pavor a cuanta gente encontraban. Los hombres y los niños al mirarlos corrían despavoridos y las mujeres unas caían desmayadas pelando tamaños ojos que unas se encomendaban a Dios y a otras ni les daba tiempo. Los gritos de histeria se oían por doquier y a las gentes que les tocó estar en su casa al saber semejante noticia se encerraron a piedra y lodo, rezando cuantas oraciones sabían y haciedo al mismo tiempo examen de conciencia; pronto el pueblo en lugar de oler dizque azufre según las sugestiones, olía a copal y a palmas benditas y reliquias perfumadas. Pero el susto y el castigo fue más grande para los ricos, dándoles a los diablos todo lo que de valor tenían; éstos después lo repartían entre la gente pobre y necesitada y otra parte la destinaban para el sostenimiento de la lucha que habían jurado sostener hasta el último momento a costa de lo que fuera.
Ya después, dueños de la situación se reunieron todos los diablos en la plaza pública para gritar: ¡Viva la revolución! ¡Viva el gran cura Hidalgo! Ya para ese acto todos se despojaron de sus disfraces y otra vez comenzaron a recorrer todas las calles, pero entonces para invitar la presencia de todos los ciudadanos para que juntos celebraran aquel feliz acontecimiento. Poco después la gente comenzó a recobrar la calma. Muy pronto la noticia se recorrió de boca en boca y la gente comenzó a salir de sus escondites y cuando estuvieron reunidos salió a flote la jugarreta. Desde entonces se siguió repitiendo ese acto que hoy es una distracción en estos gloriosos días 15 y 16 de septiembre, y seguirá repitiéndose mientras Dios nos preste

THE TRADITIONAL DIABLOS OF TELOLOAPAN

The first few months that I stayed in Teloloapan, I spent most of my time in the Cueva del Diablo, where Fidel was teaching me to make masks. During this time, I had many opportunities to talk with his father about his memories and feelings about the devil tradition. Now I wish I had taped more of our conversations, but it didn't occur to me that I would only have those months to talk to Don Fidel, before he died of a heart attack in March (see chapter six). Even so, many of our talks revolved around the same themes, and I did manage to record a few. The following is taken from those recordings and my field notes.

We were sitting in the living room/workshop of Don Fidel's house. El Periquito (the little parrot—many men are called by their nicknames instead of first names, and many of the nicknames refer to animals) was there, as were a few other men, both young

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vida, porque en la actualidad algunas autoridades muy Teloloapenses han celebrado concursos para premiar al diablo mejor vestido. Así es como se sigue impulsando la tradición.
Amigo lector, cuando guste visitarnos el 15 de septiembre, hágalo pero no se vaya a sorprender ni a desmayar cuando vea a los diablos; éstos en la actualidad son inofensivos, divertidos de lo lindo, viéndolos correr de una calle a otra seguidos por la chiquillería….

Los Diablos (versión 2)
Se cuenta que a principios de la guerra de la Independencia, cuando los indios no todos entendían lo que sería independizarse de sus amos los españoles, éstos mataban a los que explicaban el motivo por qué el señor cura don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla se había lanzado del curato de Dolores y combatía a los españoles haciéndoles huir de los pueblos y de las ciudades. Aquí en Teloloapan se sabía que algunos pueblos ya sabían que al darse el grito de libertad no serían dominados por sus amos; entonces los españoles venían a asustarlos y algunos indios no todos sumisos hacían alboroto. Una señora tuvo la idea de que se disfrazaran de fantasmas, de tigres, leones, y cmo no tenían armas usaron chicotes para hacer mucho ruido y defenderse. Como los españoles de entonces también eran muy creídos, tuvieron miedo a los disfrazados de diablos que hacían tanto alboroto y tronaban sus chicotes, y se alejaban. Continuaron practicando los indios vistiéndose de diablos y muertos, principalmente al celebrarse el aniversario del Grito de Dolores y esta práctica se conserva hasta nuestros días.

Tixtla de Guerrero, Julio de 1935.
Evila Franco Nájera, Maestra Rural Federal

and old, who were or had once been involved with the diablos. Don Fidel was playing old records by Pedro Infante and Los Panchos, and we were discussing what traditions were unique to Teloloapan. One young man says, "The diablos, of course. And the Tecampana." Another mentions the art of *techonquelite,*[32] the ofrendas, and mole. An older man remembers sliding down the unpaved, hilly streets on oiled boards when he was a child. Yet another says sadly that the traditions are disappearing one by one. The streets are all paved now, and you can't slide down them anymore. Don Fidel, defending the tradition of the diablos, says that mole is originally from Puebla, and the ofrendas come from Iguala. He thinks the Zaragoza family, the family famous for making miniature figures from techonquelite wood, is originally from Querétaro. El Periquito says, "And the Tecuanes? They are originally from Teloloapan." He claims he taught the dance for 30 years, before he lost his leg and one of his eyes. He was even invited to México City to perform with the Tecuanes, and was given a citation. Now he charges 150 pesos to teach the dance, and 100 pesos to tape the music. In 1971, he says, he was invited to have the Tecuanes perform in Chilpancingo. They gave him twenty-eight minutes, and he displayed three of the dance's eighteen parts. Don Fidel replied that he would have had to play at high speed to fit three parts into twenty-eight minutes. He continued, saying that he himself had been given many citations for the diablos, and that if El Periquito charged less, he might sell some cassettes. (Later Don Fidel tells me that the Tecuanes aren't even originally from Teloloapan either; they're from Chilacachapa.)

The men begin to talk about the way the diablos used to be. The discourse about the devils of the past is marked with some ambivalence: nostalgia for the way that things used to be seems to be mixed with a sense that the tradition has gotten better over time.

[32] Techonquelite is a very light, soft wood, which one local family (originally from Querétaro) uses to make miniature fruit baskets, storks, and other figures.

For Don Fidel, the "good old days" were when he was a young man, just taking charge of the devils and whipping them into shape. Back then, the devils weren't united like they are today. They roamed around town in separate bands based on what part of town they lived in. They were really dangerous, and there are some accounts of devils being killed after getting into fights with other devils or with bystanders. But Don Fidel took over the tradition, uniting his band of devils with other bands and forcing the rival leaders submit to his authority. He became the devils' protector and "their father." (For a man to say "*Soy tu padre*" in Mexico is also a way of asserting dominance.) He used to be, he says, "*bien bravo*," carrying a gun to scare "*pendejos*" and to protect himself from "*cabrones.*"

On other occasions, Don Fidel talked about the trouble the diablos used to get into with the authorities. They were even banned for a period of years because of the danger they posed. The authorities, "*esa bola de cabrones del ayuntamiento*," told Don Fidel to leave his "*bandidos*" at home. But he defied the politicians by bringing out the diablos anyway, because they had faith in his leadership. The people of Teloloapan supported him against the "bandidos" who were the police, because they wanted to see their diablos. Once, Don Fidel told me,

> Before, the devils were fierce. But they were too fierce and abusive. They looked for young men their age. They hit them; they cracked their whips even in the public's faces. And well, that was too fierce. To be a devil one doesn't need to be fierce. I began to discipline them, to make rules. Here in Teloloapan, they hated the devils. Now they don't. Now they love them.[33]

[33] Antes eran feroces. Pero se pasaban de feroz, y de abusivos. Buscaban a los jóvenes de su edad golpeaban, tronaban el chicote a veces hasta en la cara del público. Y bueno, ese ya se pasaba de feroz. Y para ser diablo no necesita uno ser feroz. Yo los empecé a disciplinar, a hacer la regla…Aquí en Teloloapan los odiaban a los diablos. Ahora no. Ya los quieren.

There is more respect for the tradition now, because the young men who dress as diablos today are the sons or grandsons of the men who dressed as diablos when Don Fidel was younger. There is still some danger, but not as much as before.

> In the past, when I was a boy, [the devils] were *muy groseros*. And, as I've told you, they abused the fact that they were in disguise. And for that reason, I educated them so that they would respect the children and most of all, the ladies, so that there wouldn't be problems. Because when they're very abusive, rough in cracking their whips, there are people who don't know how, and that's when people get hurt…that's why it's very dangerous. For that reason, we make sure that they don't…..that they retire and that they pay attention, so that they don't hurt anyone.[34]

However, conflicts with the ayuntamiento over control of the tradition continue. Don Fidel tells me that once, when he was still competing in the contest, the ayuntamiento judges gave him the first prize, then they took it away to give it to the son of the municipal president. He confronted the authorities in front of a television crew from Mexico City, and they returned the prize to him. His son Fidel is different, he assures me. He won't stand up for himself like that, because he's too educated. His studies gave him a profession and a chance at a better life, but they took a lot of the aggressiveness out. Fidel only loses the first prize when they rob him of it, like they tried to do with Don Fidel. Take this last year, for example, he says. They gave Fidel the second prize, even though he was clearly the best. Both the winner of the first prize and the winner of the third prize got their chicotes wrapped up in their horns several times. Did I remember the video I recorded? So they should have been automatically disqualified. Next year, he says he'll choose the judges and make sure they know what

[34] En tiempos pasados, cuando era yo un niño, eran muy groseros. Y, como le digo, abusados, de su disfraz. Y por eso yo les eduqué, no que se respeten a la niñez, y a las señoras principalmente, para que no haya problemas. Porque cuando son muy abusivos, toscos para tronar el chicote, hay personas que no saben y es a donde lastiman a una persona, por eso es muy peligroso. Por ese motivo, evitamos que no lo hagan…que se retiren y que se fijen, para no mortificar a nadie.

they're doing. Problems happen when the judges come from the ayuntamiento, or when they let the queens be judges. They don't really know anything about the contest and will just give the prizes to their friends or relatives.

According to Fidel, his father was the best in his time, just as he himself is the best now. The difference between him and his father is that Don Fidel was more "*sangrante*," which appealed to the audience. He himself is more "*civilizado*," but he can crack the whip with his left arm, which his father could never do. When Don Fidel was in Mexico, Fidel came to Teloloapan every year from Chilpancingo, where he works as a civil engineer, to help coordinate the contest. But when his father returned from his self-exile, Fidel automatically relinquished all control, because Don Fidel always has been "*el mero jefe de los diablos*" ("the real chief of the devils") and always will be.

Don Fidel recognizes that there are people who think that Fidel should retire from competition. He's been winning for twenty-five years now, and many say he should give other people a chance. But according to Don Fidel, as long as Fidel wins, he should be able to continue competing. He says he has never competed against his son. When he realized that Fidel was competent enough, he retired from competition. Fidel remembers that they did compete against each other once, the year before Don Fidel was forced to flee Teloloapan and go to Mexico City. He says his father beat him soundly. The next year, when Don Fidel was in exile (he had some legal trouble and left Teloloapan to avoid prosecution), Fidel won the contest for the first time.

Don Fidel says he taught Fidel to make masks when Fidel was a young boy. He never tried to tell him how to do anything or praised his work, because he wanted Fidel to have his own ideas. Fidel says his father never really gave him lessons in mask making; rather, he learned to make masks by watching his father. He practiced by sneaking pieces of wood when his father was out, because Don Fidel would get angry if he wasted wood.

For this reason, he doesn't make masks in exactly the same style as his father. People who learned directly from Don Fidel, like Fidel's friend Roberto, copy his style. But Fidel still uses some of the same figures that his father invented, like the parrot and a version of the eagle, in order to honor him and conserve his method of making masks. Don Fidel calls this the "patent" on devil masks in Teloloapan.

In the old days, the masks were very different. They weren't as elaborate; they didn't "*llamar la atención*" as much as they do now. Most of them had just one central figure and one or two pairs of horns. Don Fidel says that he began to change the style of the masks many years ago when he made the acquaintance of a mask collector from Mexico City. The collector counseled him to make the masks more "rustic" (Don Fidel also says "uglier") because that's what people liked. Don Fidel followed this advice, and with the collector's help, the masks began to be known outside Teloloapan. Many of the books on Mexican masks feature at least one of Don Fidel's masks, although most fail to mention his name or give an incorrect place of origin.[35] Don Fidel says that he now has clients over the world and that the devils of Teloloapan have won world-wide fame, thanks to his efforts. When he left for Mexico City, some artisans tried to pass off their own masks as those of Fidel de la Puente, but he took care of that when he returned ten years ago. The good thing about "the masks of Fidel de la Puente," he says, is that they could be made either by himself (Fidel de la Puente Fabián) or by his son (Fidel de la Puente Basabe); it's the same thing. His son's major innovation has been to elaborate on the masks, making them bigger and more complex. Now the masks that win contests have eight or more figures, six or more pairs of horns, and weigh at least eight kilos. That

[35] See, for example, Moya Rubio (1982). This author features two of Don Fidel's masks: one is listed as being from Ixcateopan and the other from Iguala. Cordry (1980) and Lechuga and Sayer (1994) do mention Don Fidel by name, although they call him Fidel de la Fuente instead of Fidel de la Puente.

means that the competitors have to be really strong in order to bear the weight of the mask and to crack the whip without getting it tangled up in the horns.

Don Fidel in his Taller

OTHER MEMORIES

Mario is slightly older than Fidel. For many years, he dressed up as the *vieja*, the old lady of the devils. Of course, there were some devils who were *groseros*, he says, some who had to drink to be able to perform. And there were some spectators who attacked the devils and tried to take off their masks. But for the most part, there was more respect. And the devils had to be really good at cracking the whip; not just anyone could dress up as a devil, like they can now.

> And moreover, it went well with us, it went well with us because, mostly on the 16th of September, we went to the stores, and before, the people treated us well because we weren't *groseros*, no, because now, um, we see that well, the people no longer have respect. Now it's just a *chicote* competition, not like before when they went out to *pasear* with the people of Teloloapan, and we would go to the

> stores and ask for our "16" and they would give us [things]. That was probably an important detail, that they would give us something on that day. And no one denied us. To give you an idea, Juan Salgado had a grocery store and he wasn't a generous man. He fixed a little cushion [with ink], and "Let's see, let's see, put your finger here" and he would mark the fingers so that they wouldn't go through more than once. And that's what the 16th was like. And later, one would go to the market, too, and they would also give us fruit, we would even take someone with us sometimes [to help us carry everything they gave us]. Everything depended on how well one behaved with the people. Not just to arrive and grab things, but to ask, with all respect. Yes, [if we did that], instead of being pleased that we were there, they would cover everything and, with a big stick, that's how they would greet us. And the 16th was also about walking around in the zócalo, because before, it was nicer. Before, on the 16th one would just walk around in the zócalo and the custom still existed that the people, the girls, would walk around in one direction. And the boys in another direction so that they could get to a place and make flirtatious comments, no? And that's how we did it, walk around in the zócalo, greet the children, the adults, take some pictures…[36]

Don Mateo is a contemporary of Don Fidel. These days he mainly confines himself to his real work, which is repairing old weapons. For many years, he set up a stand in the zócalo to sell his miniature masks during the fiestas patrias, but he because of some fights he's had with the municipal government (he is a *priista de hueso colorado*), he feels that he hasn't received much support recently. But, as he says, mask making isn't his real work, although he tries to support the tradition (*impulsar la tradición*). He

[36] Y además nos iba bien, nos iba bien, porque sobre todo el 16 de septiembre iba uno a las casas comerciales, y antes la gente se portaban bien porque no era uno grosero, no, porque ahora, este, vemos que cuando (pasando el 16) pues la gente ya no tiene respecto, ahora ya es una competencia de chicote, no como antes que salían a pasear, con la gente de Teloloapan, y el 16 pasábamos a las casas comerciales y pedíamos nuestros 16 y nos daban. A lo mejor también ese fue un detalle, no, que nos dieran algo ese día. Y nadie se negaba, por decirles, que Juan Salgado, tenía una casa de abarrotes y él no era tan generoso que digamos. Arreglaba con un cojín, y "A ver, a ver pon el dedo," y ya les marcaba para que no pasaran más de una vez. Y, y eso era el 16. Y ya después, iba uno al mercado también, y también nos daba fruta y, hasta llevábamos alguien, y todo dependía de como se portaba uno con la gente. No llegar y agarrar, sino con todo respecto, pedir. Sí, en lugar de que les gustara que llegáramos, al llegar, tapaban todas sus cosas, y estaban con el palo, no, así nos recibían. Y el 16 era de andar en el zócalo, porque antes era más bonito. Antes este, el 16 nada más allí andaba uno en el zócalo, y todavía era la costumbre que las gentes, las muchachas, caminaran en un sentido. Y los muchachos con otro sentido, para que pudieran llegar en un lugar para echar un piropo, ¿no? Y así lo hacíamos, andar en el zócalo, y saludar a los niños, a las personas adultas, tomar unas fotografías

remembers when the devils were organized by barrio. Each group would go out with its leader, and he himself was in control of one of the groups. Fidel and I went to his house to talk about how the devils used to be. In the course of the conversation we had, just after his wife came into the room, I asked Don Mateo if he remembered who had led the devils when he was young.

Don Mateo: Como no, antes de mí y de Fidel, pues, este, estábamos jóvenes, los sacaban, no me acuerdo por cierto, pero lo mataron a él, vestido de máscara, vestido de diablo. Vestido de diablo lo mataron porque en ese tiempo, no había control del ayuntamiento, éramos libres. Estaban los diablos de El Calvario, los de Mexicapán, y X, y él, como bronca, le armaban. Ese muchacho, no me acuerdo como se llamaba, lo mataron en ese callejón donde vive el ex-Presidente Andrés Antúnez Zaragoza. Allí lo mataron, en ese callejón. Lo mataron de una cuchillada.

Of course, before me and Fidel, well, um, we were young, they took them out, I don't remember, actually, but they killed him, dressed in his mask, dressed as a devil. Dressed as a devil they killed him because in that time, there wasn't any control on the part of the ayuntamiento, we were free. There were the devils of El Calvario, those of Mexicapán, and X colonia, and he, armed the devils. That boy, I don't remember his name, they killed him in that alley where the ex-President Andrés Antúnez Zaragoza lives. They killed him there, in that alley. They knifed him to death.

Fidel: Era de la familia, pues, de los Ramírez.

He was from, well, the Ramirez family.

Don Mateo: De esa familia. No me acuerdo como se llama, pero ese era, de los comisionados. Como tu papá, nada más que, ¿cómo te podría decir? Algo que no estaba tomado en cuenta. Todavía no estaba tomado en cuenta como algo importante en Teloloapan. Cada barrio tenía sus, su grupo de diablos, pero no estaban apoyados por el gobierno municipal. Y tu papá también navegó con este, porque es navegar. Ya con el apoyo del municipio, hay respeto. Inclusive, eh, había un error en aquel tiempo, porque este, alguien cometía faltas, te voy a decir jugándose en la máscara. Inclusive agarrar por ahí en las tiendas, algo así. Entonces, debido a eso, el ayuntamiento tomó en cuenta eso que está muy

From that family. I don't remember his name, but he was one of the commissioned ones. Like your father, it's just that, how can I tell you? Something that wasn't taken into account. It still wasn't taken into account as something important in Teloloapan. Each neighborhood had its, group of devils, but they weren't supported by the municipal government. And your dad also navigated with this, because it really is navigating. Now with the support of the municipality, there's respect. Including, eh, there was a mistake in that time, because um, someone would lack respect, I'll tell you, playing around in the mask. Even to grab things there in the stores, something like that. Then, because of that, the ayuntamiento took

importante pero ya se ponían los nombres de los participantes para que no, que hubiera responsabilidad. Y antes pues, era libre. Era algo, ¿cómo te podría decir? Era un delito grande, porque inclusive, no había siquiera el premio, que dijeron "vamos a premiar con un trofeo o alguna cosita, una diploma," no, nada, nada. Sus gastos particulares, y listo.

that into account, which is very important. They started to write down the names of the participants so that there would be responsibility. And before, well, it was free. It was something, how can I tell you? It was a big transgression, because there wasn't even a prize, that they would say, "we're going to award a trophy or some little thing," no, nothing, nothing. Just their personal expenses, and all set.

Fidel: Usted, más o menos, ¿en que tiempo fue que hizo su primera máscara?

You, more or less, when did you make your first mask?

Don Mateo: Bueno, afortunadamente está aquí esta señora, mi esposa. Voy a platicar una anécdota. Fue más o menos en el año, como el 70 o, por ahí como en el 65.

Well, fortunately, my *señora* is here, my wife. I'm going to relate an anecdote. It was more or less in the year, like '70 or around then, like in '65.

Fidel: Entonces, antes nada más se vestía de diablo.

So, before you just dressed as a devil?

Don Mateo: Sí, no más me vestía. Bueno, me hacía la mía. Me hacía mi máscara, pero como te digo, no se tomaba en cuenta, ni había competencia de que será la mejor, o nada. Hacía uno su máscara como salía, y vámonos. Y este, ya la primera máscara que hice, me recuerdo que ella era mi novia, le hice una mascarita así. Ella trabajó, bueno, sus padres de crianza, padrinos fueron los Martínez. Entonces, en el 16 salíamos, salía yo en el zócalo con un par de mascaritas pero así, chiquitas, unas cuatro o cinco. Lo que sí, las primeras chucherías las hice yo, como en el ´65 el ´70, como en el ´65. Recuerdo que hice, sesenta máscaras. Bien, bien acordado. Y donde comprábamos pintura, por 20 centavos, lo daban así en un botecito. Nos servía. Y no había peluche ni nada. Yo por ejemplo, mataba conejos, y las pieles de los conejos, esas las

Yes, I just dressed up. Well, I made my own. I made my mask, but like I told you, it wasn't taken into account. There wasn't even a competition of who would be the best, or anything. One would just make his mask however it came out, and let's go. And um, now the first mask I made, I remember that she was my girlfriend, I made her a little mask, like this. She worked, well, her godparents were the Martinez family. Then, on the 16th, we would go out, I would go out in the zócalo with a couple of little masks, but like this, small, around four or five. But yes, the first little things I made, like in '65 or '70, like in '65. I remember that I made, sixty masks. I remember very well. And where we would buy paint, for 20 centavos, they would give it like this, in a little can. It worked for us. And there wasn't any fake fur or anything. And, for

pintaba y esas le iba pegando a la máscara.

example, we would kill rabbits, and the skins of the rabbits, I would paint them and I would attach them to the mask.

Fidel: ¿Sin curtir?

Without curing them?

Don Mateo: Sin curtir, nada más que el conejo seco, ya casi está curtido. El conejo es una piel muy fina.
Entonces me recuerdo que ese ´60, y que eran las fiestas casi no más en el campo deportivo, ahí se exhibía la reina y todo eso, allá en el campo deportivo, no había nada en el zócalo. Allá eran casi todos los eventos. Pero no estaba la Técnica, nada más el campo deportivo. Y andaba por la Juárez, todo eso de gente, era una cosa impresionante. Entonces, subió la reina, en una camión así, y atrás la música de viento de Chilacachapa, y me conocían ellos. Y yo en mi casa tenía mis mascaritas, bien arregladas, sus banderitas y todo, y le digo a ella, "¿Y si no se venden? Nos vamos a poner la vergüenza."

Without curing them, just that the dried rabbit, it's almost cured already. Rabbit is a very fine skin. So I remember that year '60, and that the fiestas were pretty much just in the sports field, that's where they exhibited the queen and all that, there in the sports field. There wasn't anything in the zócalo. That's where almost all of the events took place. The Técnica [the technical secondary school] wasn't there, just the sports field. And in the [colonia] Juárez, all those people walking around, it was very impressive. Then, the queen would get into a big truck like this, and behind her the brass band from Chilacachapa, and they knew me. And I, in my house I had my little masks, well-arranged, their little flags and everything, and I say to her, "And if they don't sell? We're going to be embarrassed."

Su esposa: Me dice, "Te llevas un cartón…"

His wife: He says to me, "Take a box…"

Don Mateo: Digo, "Te llevas un cartón, y si ves que no se venden, como que vas metiéndolas…para que no nos ponga la vergüenza…" Llegamos, y este, nos colocamos, por ahí. Me coloqué en frente de la Farmacia Mojica, ahí en frente me coloqué, pues apenado y todo eso, cuando anuncian que no se vendieran las máscaras. Que no se vendieran la artesanía, porque iban a pasar jueces, calificativos, a calificar la artesanía. Después de que pasaran los jueces, ya que iba haber un concurso en ese tiempo de cincuenta pesos. Yo las máscaras así, las daba, a uno cincuenta, a peso, a dos pesos. Ya la máscara, entonces se imagina a cincuenta pesos, ya estaba vendiendo…

I say, "Take a box, and if you see that they don't sell, you put them in [the box] so that we don't have to be embarrassed." We arrived and um, we set up over there. I set myself up in front of the Mojica Pharmacy, there in front I set myself up, well, embarrassed and all that, when they announced that we shouldn't sell the masks, that we shouldn't sell the crafts, because the judges were going to pass by, to judge the crafts. After the judges had passed by, since there was going to be a contest, in that time [with a prize of] fifty pesos. I would sell the masks for one fifty, for a peso, two pesos. So the mask, then you can imagine at fifty pesos, it would be like selling…

Fidel: Cincuenta máscaras.

Fifty masks.

Don Mateo: ¡Cincuenta máscaras! ¡Híjole! A ver que pasa. No, cuando pasan calificando, en la artesanía, saqué el primer lugar, con las máscaras. Y de pilón, entonces llegó una señora, pero estaba tan enojada, bueno me insultaba. Decía "Ahora, es que, hasta donde llegamos los humanos de locos, de vender máscaras. Yo de poner en mi casa en lugar de un santo, una máscara. Bueno, ¿no, no está usted enfermo, mental?" me decía la señora, y era preparada, gente preparada porque no hablaba, o hablaba bien, bien este, enriqueciendo su vocabulario aunque sea para insultar, y ahora sí, empiezan a vender, y empiezan…Créeme cuando digo que me hice alrededor de treinta minutos para vender la última máscara. Y estaban unas casillas de los Blases, y la de los Linos, de los Sotelo, se llamaban, había dos casillas frente al palacio municipal…

Fifty masks! Híjole! Let's see what happens, No, when they come by judging, in crafts, I took the first place, with the masks. And for something extra, then a señora came by, but she was so mad, well she insulted me. She said, "Now, this is what we crazy humans have come to, selling masks. And I, instead of putting a saint in my house, a mask. Well, aren't you mentally ill?" the señora said to me, and she was educated, an educated person, because she didn't speak, or she spoke well, well, um, with a rich vocabulary, even if it was only to insult and now, they begin to sell, and they begin…Believe me when I say that it took about thirty minutes to sell the last mask. And there were some stands owned by the Blases, and one owned by the Linos, the Sotelos, they were called, there were two stands in front of the municipal palace…

Fidel: Sí, de Doña Bartola, pues.

Yes, Doña Bartola's.

Don Mateo: De Doña Bartola, pero antes era de los Corteros, algo así. Los Blases. Entonces, después de que vio que terminé le digo a la señora, le digo, "Señora, no se enoja yo sé que así, pues, lo que usted dice, es el mundo pues, como estamos." Le digo "Me dio gusto. ¿Véngase a tomar un refresco? Me iré a tomar un refresco en la casilla." Pero me vendí como doscientos pesos, más cincuenta de mi premio. Y estoy contento que, que me calificaran. Y subí a dar las gracias, fui allá al palacio fui al templete, y "gracias, y espero que me sigan impulsando" porque, pues este, aparte de que somos de aquí, la artesanía la hacemos en nombre de Teloloapan. No la hacemos en nombre de nosotros. Cuando van a Chilpancingo no dicen "Los diablos de Fidel

Doña Bartola's, but before it was owned by the Corteros, something like that. The Blases. Then, after she saw that I had finished, I say to the señora, I say "Señora, don't me mad, I know that well, what you say is the world we're in." I say, "It was nice to meet you. Would you like to have a soft drink? I'm going to have a soft drink in the stand." But I sold like two hundred pesos, besides the fifty from my prize. And I'm pleased that, that they judged me. And I went up to thank them, I went up there to the palace, I went to the stage, and "Thank you, and I hope you continue to impel" because, well um, apart from the fact that we're from here, we make the crafts in the name of Teloloapan. We don't make it in our names. When they go to Chilpancingo, they

de la Puente," "Los diablos de Teloloapan." Y se siente escalofrío al ver cómo andan, cómo reaccionan.

don't say "The devils of Fidel de la Puente," [it's] "The devils of Teloloapan." And you get goose bumps to see them, how the people react.

Don Emilio is of the same generation as Don Fidel and Don Mateo. He also makes masks, and used to dress as a devil in his youth. When the devils were invited to Iguala to participate in the fiesta of the Bandera, I drove my truck filled with the masks, while the devils piled into the back of Fidel's truck to make the hour-long trip. Don Emilio rode with me, as he was going to try and sell a couple of his masks at the fair. We talked about the devils most of the way, although he didn't want me to tape the conversation because he wanted to write down his memories for me instead. But he told me he started in 1940 and continued to go out as a devil until around 1955. He remembers when the Apaches and la Muerte used to accompany the devils. Not many people now can recall their participation, and almost no one has been able to tell me why they were involved in the tradition, or why they stopped participating. But Don Emilio remembers that each barrio's group of devils had a couple of Apaches and a Muerte. He said that they became involved with the devils because some "real" Apaches and some Yaquis came to Teloloapan in the 1910's to escape the Revolution. He can't say exactly how it was that they joined up with the devils, but something brought them together. I imagine that, at least for the people of Teloloapan, "Apaches" (who discursively become the indigenous group most representative of "the savage", and may be used as a catch-all tribe referring to any "wild Indian" or indeed, any Native North American group; see chapter three for more on this theme), share with the devils a sense of "otherness," of wildness, of the uncontrollable. The presence of Death among the devils is not so inexplicable, as the two figures have often been linked. Brandes, for example, mentioned that a Death dancer participated with the devils in Michoacán (1988).

But the Apaches and la Muerte have disappeared from Teloloapan's fiestas patrias, as has the devils' identification with Teloloapan's colonias. Don Emilio, unlike some of his fellow ex-devils, remembers those days fondly. The devils were fiercer, but more respectful then. He himself went out with a group of devils led by Don José Altamirano, whom he refers to as "*un diablo muy elegante*." Back then, the devils dressed better. No one would think of wearing tennis shoes; everyone had boots. Many even wore riding pants, which were very fashionable at the time. There were many more devils, between thirty and fifty in each neighborhood. Sometimes there would be fights between the devils of rival colonias, but each group would look after its devils. Sometimes they would even protect other groups from boys who tried to attack them. Nowadays, each devil is sent off to take care of himself, and the children and young men of the town don't respect them anymore.

The devils themselves aren't as respectful as they used to be. When he was young, he wouldn't have dreamed of yelling and whistling at girls like they do now. In the past, each young man would buy miniature crafts for his girlfriend. Artisans used to make miniature wooden furniture, miniature masks, fruits and birds made of techonquelite (and that craft has really declined, he says). Even those who couldn't afford to buy presents would give their girlfriends flowers, at least. But look at them now, yelling *piropos* at the girls from the back of the truck. Don Emilio shakes his head, sadly, but smiling. The boys don't seem to be particularly interested in the conversation. Perhaps they are too young to be afflicted with nostalgia.

THE CONTEST OF THE DIABLITOS: TEACHING CULTURE THROUGH DEVILHOOD

Part of the reason for the "taming" of the devils has been the increased participation of young boys. When Fidel was young, he was the only boy who dressed up as a devil, and only because he was Don Fidel's son. Four years ago, a devil competition for young boys was set up by Prof. Francisco Nájera, the author of the pamphlet on the devil tradition and the *cronista* of Teloloapan. The contest takes place on September 13, which is also the national holiday that celebrates the Niños Héroes, the cadets of Chapultepec Castle who were killed "defending Mexico against Yankee imperialists" when the United States invaded Mexico in 1847. On the morning of the 13th, the students of Teloloapan's kindergardens parade in the center of town wearing their white uniforms and carrying pictures of the young martyrs. The contest of the diablitos takes place in the afternoon. Its structure parallels that of the contest of the diablos grandes: young boys between five and twelve years old show off their masks and their ability with the whip, and the winner receives a cash prize. In 2000, the winner won 1500 pesos (about 150 dollars). The judges are a little more lenient in granting points for the mask and the cuera, since both are harder to find in small sizes. Some of the boys who can't borrow or can't afford a cuera wear long, tan coats.

Fidel has decided to focus more on the young boys so that they will learn from an early age to respect the diablo tradition. In 2000, after the *temporada* of the devils was to have ended, he took out a group of diablitos to visit a few of the colonias and then to *echar relajo* in the zócalo. He loaned masks and specially-made child sized cueras to each boy who wanted to participate. Lines of boys waited in the zócalo to take advantage of the chance to be a devil, if only for a few minutes. To raise the public's level of knowledge about the diablos' history, there has been some talk of making contestants in the diablito competition answer questions about the tradition of the diablos in order to

increase their points. Already, teachers in local schools often have their students write about the devils, among other Teloloapense traditions, as part of their schoolwork. Several times a year, groups of students come to Don Fidel to interview him about the devils.

At the same time, there is some ambivalence about the performance of young boys. Most men agree that it is a good idea that they learn to value the tradition and begin to practice as a diablo early, but many also feel that the presence of young boys when the devils perform, particularly outside of Teloloapan, makes the tradition look less elegant; young boys don't *lucir* as much as older boys or men. The ideal diablo should be tall, slender, and strong, qualities which young boys don't usually yet have. Older men often talk about the past, when boys didn't take part in the tradition because it was just too dangerous.

But now the diablitos learn what it means to be Teloloapense by participating in a practice is defined as "tradition." It links the present with the past, modern men with nineteenth-century revolutionaries. It also links young men with older men; experienced devils provide younger ones with a model of appropriate diabolic and masculine behavior. As Matthew Gutman writes, "machismo can be seen to represent a contested space for the acquisition of manhood structuring the relative position between men" (1996: 243). Boys who perform as devils are given the chance to show, from an early age, whether they are "more" or "less" of a man. Those companions not lucky enough to be able to beg, borrow or steal the required equipment look up to and envy them the fortunate few.

"TELOLOAPAN EXPORTS DEVILS"

I mentioned earlier that Pedro Ascencio's nineteenth-century insurgents are temporally removed from today's devils, but the devil tradition exists because the space of performance is imagined as the same. Teloloapan was the setting for the devils' first appearance, and Teloloapan is the stage for modern performances. The devils are perceived as being uniquely Teloloapense; they are arguably the town's most recognizable icons. Their images, along with other local traditions like the ofrendas for the Días de los Muertos and the Abrazo de Acatempan, adorn the walls of the ayuntamiento. A devil mannequin and a set of miniature devils occupy the front room of the municipal museum. There is talk of constructing a monument to the devils inside the front hall of the ayuntamiento. And the devils themselves mark the territory of Teloloapan with their bodies as they walk from neighborhood to neighborhood, always returning to the zócalo, the center of town, just as the original devils are said to have done one hundred and eighty years ago. (Significantly, this territory, traced in performance, is the city of Teloloapan, not the municipio of the same name. The diablos are citizens of Teloloapan, not the surrounding pueblos, and they rarely visit those other towns.)

But the diablos have come to stand for the entire municipio of "Teloloapan" outside the municipality's boundaries. The devils are invited to perform in civic parades and folkloric festivals all over the state, and occasionally, in other states as well. They commonly participate in the "Fandango Guerrerense" in Acapulco and the "Paseo del Pendón" in Chilpancingo[37]; they have performed during the "Feria de la Plata" in Taxco,

[37] The "Paseo del Pendón" takes place in Chilpancingo in December, as part of the Christmas and New Year's Fair. Dances from all over the state take part in a long parade around the city. Originally, the "Paseo del Pendón" took place in Mexico City on the 13th of August as part of the celebratory commemoration of the Conquest, taking its name from Cortés' nickname "Don Pendón." During the procession, the Conquest was reenacted, and a replica of Cortés' banner was paraded through the streets of the Capital, before it was returned to its place alongside the Conquerer's remains in the Hospital de la Purísima Concepción y Jesús Nazareno (Lomnitz 2006: 348).

the "Expo" of Arcelia, and the "Fiestas de la Bandera" in Iguala. On one occasion, they were invited to represent the state of Guerrero in a folkloric festival in Mexico City. The written legend has also traveled to other places; the current cronista took his version to a meeting of all the official chroniclers of the state.[38] (Each cronista was asked to share the "culture" of his or her municipio in the form of local traditions. Professor Nájera also took his version of the legend of the Tecampana.) The poster "Así es México" with an image of one of Don Fidel's masks points to the devils' ability to stand for the entire nation, representing Mexico to itself and to the outside world.

But the diablos in performance are particularly useful, portable symbols of the town and municipality of Teloloapan and at times, the state of Guerrero and the republic of Mexico. Place becomes mobile, in a certain sense, and the devils add synecdoche to their symbolic repertory. As spectators, and occasional participants, audience members are invited to share in this Teloloapan-ness, this *teloloapensidad.*[39]

Of course, in the context of the civic or folkloric parade, the devils are removed from the context of the fiestas patrias of Teloloapan, just as the other invited dances are removed from their primary contexts and made to stand for particular places; so the performances assume the curious status of standing for places, but being "out-of-place."[40] The fact that many of the parades involve an announcer who explains the "significance"

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[38] Each municipio in Mexico may have an official cronista, or chronicler, who is appointed by the municipal president. In this case, Professor Nájera was also the Regidor (councilman) of Culture. As Regidor, he established the local museum, the Casa de la Cultura, the contest for designing the municipal seal, and the Diablito contest. As cronista municipal, he printed written versions of the legends of the diablos and the Tecampana, Teloloapan's two most important traditions. See González y González (1971) for the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of local historiography, or "*microhistoría*."

[39] *Teloloapensidad* is not a word I have ever heard used, but I employ it here to mirror the concept of *mexicanidad*.

[40] In the Feria de la Bandera in Iguala, February of 2001, the devils were not the only symbols taken out of context. They were invited to participate along with other "traditions" from Teloloapan: mole-makers and bakers. The latter brought the "typical" bread made in Teloloapan: *cajitas* ("little boxes," small cakes made of rice flour), *piedras* ("stones," made from corn meal) and *hojaldres*, highly decorated loaves that are usually only made during the Days of the Dead in late October and early November.

of each performance to the audience only highlights this "out-of-place-ness," as there is no need to "explain" the performances when they occur in their original place and time.

In general, though, the diablos' appearances in other places have not radically altered what they do in performance. Their three main activities (entertaining the public, flirting with girls, and making off with food and drink) remain basically the same. I take the following description from a videotape I made during the Feria de la Bandera in Iguala, February of 2001:

February 16: The devils have arrived late and are quickly getting dressed in the street. El Peligro ties the mask of the vieja onto a nephew of his. The other devils help each other tighten their masks. El Peligro isn't feeling well, so there will be no enmascarado today. One of the organizers approaches Fidel and asks him about the meaning of the dance. He replies that it's not really a dance, but a tradition. The devils crack their whips and entertain the audience, and their origins are in the war for Independence. The organizer writes all of this down, hands Fidel the banner that says "Diablos de Teloloapan," and asks the devils to hurry up, since the parade has already started.

The street in front of the zócalo is lined with people waiting to see the parade of dances from the state of Guerrero. As each group passes the grandstand, the announcer explains the significance of the dance. Like Teloloapan's devils, many of these dances are performances of local historic events (often within a national or international context). First, the Tecuanes from Coatepec Costales, followed by the Dance of the Huacal from Tuxpan, then the "*Cuadro Costumbrista*" from Taxco, with students dressed in "typical" dress. The announcer qualifies, "This isn't really a dance, but that doesn't

mean it isn't representative." Then come the *Moros Chinos* from Ahuacatzingo,[41] the dance of the *Gallos* from Arcelia, the Dance of the *Toros* and the Dance of *El Cortés* from Tecpan, *Los Manueles* from Tixtla, *Los Espueleros* and the Dance of the *Diablos* from Mochitlán,[42] the *Tigres* of Zitlala along with their band, the *Tlacololeros* of Chilpancingo, a truck carrying musicians and student performers who recreate some traditional dances of Tixtla, the *Diablos* of Cuajinicualapa,[43] the Apaches of Azoyú who are accompanied by their festival queens in evening gowns and tiaras,[44] and finally, the Diablos of Teloloapan. Unlike the other participants, the diablos do not have a structured dance. They saunter down the middle of the street, occasionally stopping to crack their whips or flirt with female bystanders. One devil pretends to be so exhausted after his display that he falls to the ground, and the audience laughs and applauds. Fidel stops in front of the table of honor to show off his skill: he drops to one knee and cracks his whip

[41] For more on these dances, see Warman 1972, Nájera-Ramirez 1997 and Rodriguez 1996.

[42] This dance is quite distinct from the tradition of the diablos in Teloloapan, although there is some crossover. The devils of Mochtitlán are accompanied by various "viejas" or "diablas," and a Death dancer. But they are also accompanied by a child playing the part of San Miguel Arcangel; this dance is a religious one that represents the struggle between good and evil.

[43] Cuajinicualpa pertains to the Costa Chica of Guerrero, the coastal region south of Acapulco, which is largely populated by a mixture of indigenous people and the descendants of African slaves; many inhabitants of this region still speak Nahuatl. These devils wear leather masks covered with horse hair and dance to music played on the jawbone of a donkey. The dance is usually performed as part of the offerings to the dead made on November 1 and 2, and is originally said to have been dedicated to the African god Ruja (Rodriguez 2000: 12).

[44] Like Cuajinicualpa, Azoyú is part of the Costa Chica. The Apaches wear red loincloths and cardboard headdresses decorated with turkey feathers. They paint their bodies black, and carry bows and arrows. At the head of the group is the queen of the Apaches (who in this instance walks behind the two festival queens), wears a headdress and a beaded blouse and long skirt. She (the performer is a woman) also carries her bow and arrows, along with a feathered shield. According to Rodriguez, this dance dates from the Conquest and is meant to honor the Emperor Cuauhtémoc. Interestingly, the Apaches' costumes resemble descriptions of Yope dress. The Yopes, who before the Conquest inhabited what is now the Costa Chica and part of the Montaña region of Guerrero, were one of the very few indigenous groups who resisted Mexica incursions into their territory, maintaining independence until the middle of the 16th century. In other versions of the dance, the Apaches are referred to as "Los Mecos" (Rodriguez 1996: 13; and see chapter four of this dissertation).

with his left hand. The announcer, misinformed, tells the public that the devils commemorate a battle between Teloloapenses and French soldiers during the 1860's.

As the parade continues on its way, the devils, who don't have their own music, take advantage of the brass band that accompanies the Apaches of Azoyú. They dance along, mockingly imitating the Apaches' choreography and pulling women from the audience to dance with them. The vieja tries, with limited success, to get a male bystander to dance with her; only one laughingly agrees. Ivonne dances with a young woman who obviously does not know she is not a man. Every few minutes, a devil hands me a drink or piece of fruit that he has been given by someone on the sidelines. Much of this booty gets left behind, since I can't carry it all and film at the same time.

By the time the devils reach the fairgrounds, about three miles away from where the parade started, they are exhausted; a few didn't last and took off their masks early. Apparently, the dances are supposed to proceed to the bullring to perform for the dignitaries who are awaiting their arrival, but there is no one to tell the devils where to go, and they collapse at the entrance to the fair. Fidel says that it doesn't really matter, since he hasn't yet figured out how to create specific choreography for the devils. In a place like a bullring, where the audience is removed from the action, the devils can't perform like they usually do. He talks about adding music as well, so that the devils don't have to depend on the bands of other dances. The popular music used during the contest doesn't seem appropriate, so he's thinking about finding some music that would have been played during Independence, or at least during the Revolution.

February 26: The devils have returned to Iguala to participate in a kind of "Teloloapan Day." The kiosk in the center of the zócalo is draped with a banner that says "Traditions and Customs; Samples of Gastronomy and Crafts, Teloloapan, Guerrero." It is emblazoned with the city seal, which features among other symbols, a devil with mask,

cuera, chicote, and the words "*16 Septiembre*."[45] The stands of the *moleros* and *panaderos* are arranged in a circle in front of the banner. Mole Rojo "Lucy," Mole Rojo "Teloloapan," Mole Rojo "Tecampanero." Mounds of red mole paste, mole with sesame, mole with almonds, bowls of green mole ground into powder and ready to be reconstituted. Teloloapan's famous bread: *cajitas* ("little boxes:" small cakes made of rice flour), *piedras* ("rocks," made of corn meal), and *hojaldres* (highly decorated loaves usually only made for the offerings of the Days of the Dead in late October and early November; these, like the devils, are also removed from their traditional time and place so that they can represent Teloloapan outside its boundaries. They would never be sold in Teloloapan in February.)

Fidel has arranged his masks on several low, stone walls. Miniature masks are also being sold, as well as miniature devils (who are really Ken dolls in disguise). Each one wears a small, felt cuera, a miniature mask, rubber boots, belts made of ribbon; and each carries a small chicote, braided just like the real ones. A real cuera is hung on a tree, topped with this year's winning mask. Don Emilio, who was also invited, has interspersed the three masks he brought with those brought by Fidel. His style is a little different: the masks are simpler, more like they used to be years ago.

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[45] This seal was designed in 1978 as part of a competition sponsored by the municipal government. In addition to the devils, it includes a representation of the Tecampana, Prince Tecampa and Princess Na, a small sugar skull from the Days of the Dead, and a rendering of the preconquest glyph which represented Teloloapan. Twelve designs were submitted: of those, eleven featured the Tecampana, eight featured the river to which the name Teloloapan is said to refer, and seven featured the devils (although the winning design was the only one which featured a whole devil; the other six only included the mask), and two featured the Abrazo de Acatempan. Other symbols included the main church, the government building, workers in the corn fields, and a representation of the state seal, which features a pre-conquest Jaguar Warrior (Nájera 1987). In 2000, a local man claimed to have seen a printed ticket with the winning seal on it from the early 1900's. A picture of the ticket, including the date, was printed in a local magazine, causing a controversy over whether or not the current seal's design had been copied from an earlier version of the emblem.

A trio is singing songs of Teloloapan in the kiosk. Some of the songs are their own compositions; others were written by the famous Teloloapense trio Los Cancioneros del Sur. A couple of devils go up the stairs cautiously to dance to the music. Others are standing with Juan Morales, who is the M.C. of today's event, which is being broadcast on T.V. in both Iguala and Teloloapan. He gives an animated version of the legend, and one of the devils gives a display of whip skills. A bystander remarks, "Wow, they really sound like bullets." He then introduces Fidel, "the father of the devils, symbolically speaking, creator of these masks which have received world-wide recognition." Fidel expresses his pleasure that the devils have been able to visit Iguala and share part of Teloloapan with their neighbors. (There is a devil mask from Teloloapan in the local Museo de la Bandera, but the woman in charge when we visited did not know its origin. She said she thought it might have been from Tixtla.)

Juan then promises a kilo of mole to the first Igualteco who can answer a question about the legend he has just related. The only person who volunteers is a young woman, the Princess of Iguala's fiestas patrias, who has been invited to add splendor to the event. Juan asks her, "What was the name of the commander in charge of the men who took the plaza of Teloloapan dressed as devils?" She is not sure. Juan says, "His name starts with a P." She shrugs, smiling. "P as in Pedro." "Pedro Ascensio," she replies, and wins a kilo of *mole rojo*.

Juan then walks around to talk to each of the panaderos and moleros in turn. One of the mole-makers is from Acatempan, and invites the public to sample her *mole verde* and *tamales nejos*, the traditional food of the Abrazo de Acatempan. She starts to explain how the mole is made (from squash seeds), but then laughs and says she can't give away the secret recipe.

Later that evening, the devils go to the fairgrounds. Some of the young men had complained that there weren't enough young women in the zócalo, but the fair was full of girls. Fidel's nephew scares a few of them, and then goes off to see if he can get anything from the vendors. He returns with a small basket of sweets, a taco, and a hot dog. His best friend, very shy in "real life," has a girl on each arm. There are a few people from Teloloapan watching; one little boy is enthralled with the devils and follows them everywhere. A couple of the other men haven't put their masks back on, and are sitting at a table drinking beer. It's late, so the devils only walk around for a little while, then they pile back into the two pickup trucks, and we drive back to Teloloapan.

MADE IN CHINA

During the devil season of 2005, an Asian couple came to Teloloapan and began asking about masks and mask-makers. A rumor quickly spread through town: the Chinese had come to steal local secrets in order to mass-produce masks and mole so that they could sell them cheaply on the world market. Someone had heard that the Chinese were already producing Oaxacan mole, and, as many pointed out, even the Mexican flags and red-white-and-green noisemakers sold during the *fiestas patrias* bore the label "made in China." *Hoy en día, el Diablo anda suelto*. Nowadays, the Devil wanders around at will.

While other kinds of knowledge base their authority on science, personal experience or tradition, rumor is an instance of what Volosinov termed "reported speech" and as such, is based on the authority of the spoken word, "hearsay." Most devil stories have their source in rumor. As Stewart and Strathern argue, rumor is part of the general human search for meaning. Rumors "often work as explanatory devices, filling in the interpretive gaps around 'facts' or 'reports' and making narratives that fit with people's

fears and presuppositions, their emotional conditions in general" (2004:42). But, although they "may feed on or emerge from fantasy and emotional states…they gain plausibility through their connection with real-world events of one sort or another" (ibid. 48). Rumors may be employed as one means of dealing with the palpable fear of globalization and its consequences for cultural identity, making up part of the multiple popular discourses which confront the center from the margins, "weapons of the weak" (Scott 1990) perhaps, but certainly voiced in a critical register.[46]

As it happened, the two visitors were tourists, originally from Japan, but now living in New York. They loved Mexican crafts and festivals, and spent most of their vacations traveling in Mexico to places they had seen online or read about in magazines. They had heard of Teloloapan because of a report on Fidel and the devils written up in *Mexico Desconocido* (Anaya 2002). The Christmas card we received from them that year featured a picture of the couple dressed in matching *sombreros* and *sarapes* in front of the Christmas tree in their New York apartment; the devil mask they had bought from Fidel was prominently displayed on the wall next to them.

Something about the would-be Chinese industrial spies-turned Japanese tourists dressed in "traditional" Mexican costume in their urban US dwelling struck me as a little surreal. But the image speaks to an experience that tourists and Teloloapense artisans have in common, that uncanny sense of "lack," the desire for origins and authenticity, unmediated by the alienating forces of modernity. For both the tourist and the Teloloapense, the other has power. Because of their phenotype, these Japanese tourists were at first associated with the emergence of China as a major economic power and a

[46] See Turner (1993) for a discussion of the rumors that circulated in the African American community about a link between Church's Fried Chicken and the Ku Klux Klan as part of a discourse of political resistance towards the dominant Anglo society. She also cites rumors targeting Proctor and Gamble, Reebok, and the Coca Cola Company (see chapter five).

threat to other countries that had previously served as the major sources of underpaid labor. Later, as tourists, they came to be linked to the economic resources that permit leisure travel and the acquisition of luxury goods. On the other hand, from the mask maker emanates the power of the "authentic," of manual production and "traditional culture." It is his fetishized labor, more than the aesthetic qualities of the mask, which imbues the object with meaning.

It is interesting to recall how many devil pacts are enacted in this context of the encounter between "tradition" and "modernity," how the rich European plantation owner, the handsome gringo, the (Japanese!) mining corporation, the inquiring anthropologist, and now, the phantom Chinese crafts producer can stand in for the Devil in this structure of feeling that combines the frustration of the marginalized with a nostalgic desire for an idealized past. In the story of the Japanese tourists, as in so many, the devil is double: for the tourist-consumer the devil mask represents authenticity, the tradition of the hand-crafted artistic object and the expression of a particularly Teloloapense/Mexican way of being-in-the-world; but the Teloloapense producer finds the diabolic in the machine, the threat of modernity, the theft of a way of life and the massification of the unique object

The magazine article that drew the Japanese tourists to Teloloapan and other attempts to salvage and promote Mexican cultural patrimony also arise from the sense that what makes Mexico unique, its culture, is being lost. Rescuing "tradition" becomes a way of fixing national identity, creating a bulwark against powerful international forces that would homogenize and destroy it. In this constellation of signs and social relations, the uncanny duality of the concept of tradition, at least in its etymological origins, becomes pertinent. On the one hand, "tradition" referred to the transmission of knowledge from fathers to sons; but "betrayal" was an alternate meaning (Williams 1985: 319). In fact in Spanish, one must enunciate clearly to distinguish between *tradición* and

traición. For Teloloapenses, rumors about the Chinese mass-producing local crafts do imply a sense of betrayal: the belief that modernity is moving too fast for tradition, leaving them adrift with little or no support from the State.

This vision contrasts two different "regimes of value" (Appadurai 1988: 4) which could be perceived in terms of the difference between the gift (local, use-value, handcrafted) and the commodity (international, exchange-value, mass-produced). But for the artisans intimately engaged in the production of devil masks, the concept of tradition is not simply about the maintenance of local identity, but also forms part of the struggle for economic survival and sense of self. For Fidel, who makes his living as an engineer, mask making is part of being his father's son. In the face of recent challenges to his leadership, he has considered protecting his family's identification with the devils by "patenting" the tradition, turning his father's metaphor into reality and invoking a discourse on authorial rights which runs contrary to the long-standing connection between artisanry and "gifting." These competing discourses on tradition remind us that far from being limited to the conservative transmission of unchanging actions and values, "tradition can be static, and it can be fluid; it can whirl in place, revolving through kaleidoscope transformations, or it can strike helical, progressive, or retrograde tracks through time" (Glassie 1995).

The Diablo tradition in Teloloapan involves masks and mask-making, but it also involves performance. The devil contest engages crafted objects with gendered bodies, decentering the opposition between us and them, self and other, tradition and modernity. This corporeal encounter between practice, material object and discourse is the subject of chapter two.

Chapter 2. Gendered Discourse, Practice and Performance

Don Fidel: Sí, es que aquí, no se, no se muestra la prepotencia, de que el ser humano sea muy prepotente, no. Es que representa el papel del diablo, ¿no? Que se hacen de, de groseros, y luego ya con la máscara puesta siente uno una sensación así como, como es otro uno. Y más tratándose de odio. Entonces, allí es a donde se apodera el diablo en la persona de uno, su espíritu. Y por eso no tiene uno ni vergüenza ni miedo, uno. Andando de diablo, y muchos, se les pasa de fuerza, mal, maligna. Porque luego van y manosean a alguien o le pegan a chicotazos a uno en la cara, bueno, se les pasa. Y sí, siente una sensación misteriosa poniéndose una máscara. Se siente Ud. más, más gallo que como es uno, ¿ya?

Yes, it's that here, you don't see, you don't see the arrogance, that human beings are very arrogant. That's where the Devil comes in, you see? The people act, they act rude, and then, with the mask on, one feels a sensation like, like you're someone else. And more when it comes to hate. So, that is where the Devil takes over in one's spirit. And that's why one isn't ashamed or afraid. Performing as a devil, and many, they get too strong, too forceful, evil, malignant. Because then they go and rough someone up, or they hit someone in the face with the whip. Well, they go too far. And yes, you feel a mysterious sensation putting on a mask. You feel more, more *gallo* than you really are, you know?

Anne: Entonces, ¿hay algo entre la figura del diablo y, el macho?

So, there's some relationship between the figure of the diablo and the macho?

Don Fidel: Sí. Y entonces, pues hasta para abrazar a una mujer, siente bonito. Tenemos una anécdota que, fuimos a un pueblito de, de indígenas, más que nosotros, porque, todos somos indígenas, pero más indígenas. Que hablan en náhuatl, o sea en mexicano que le nombran. Entonces, puros rebocitos, morenitas las muchachas, y con sus rebocitos, pues da el cambio que se ven pues, feítas. Y ya vistiéndose un muchacho que llegó y dice que uuu, aquí vamos con hartas inditas, todos no, ya de diablos, andaban haciendo una abrazadera no que inditas ni que nada, no para los diablos. Allí demuestra que hay un cambio en la persona, ¿ya?

Yes. And then, well, even holding a women, it feels nice. We have an anecdote that, we went to a little town of, of indigenous people, more than we are, because, we're all indigenous, but [they were] more indigenous. They speak in Nahuatl, or in mexicano, as they call it. So, just shawls, the girls with their dark skin, and with their little shawls *[he mimics the shawls covering the girls' faces]*, well, you know, they look, well, ugly. And when the boys were getting dressed up, one says, "Oooh, here we go with a bunch of Indian girls *[he makes a gesture of repugnance]*, but then, once they were dressed up as devils, they went around grabbing everyone. There were no "Indian girls" or

	anything like that, not for the devils. So that shows that there's a change in the person, right?
John: ¿Y el cambio es algo atractivo, aunque es diablo?	And the change is appealing, even though it's the devil?
Don Fidel: Sí. Y a veces es feroz. Digo, por eso mata a uno, a veces. O golpea a cierta persona uno. Y mata, y cuando le hace algo a uno, más. Más, más…Siente uno más odio.	Yes. And sometimes it is fierce. I mean, that's why [a devil] kills someone, sometimes. Or hits someone. And kills, and when someone does something to him…more. More, more, you feel more hate.
Anne: Entonces, las mujeres no pueden vestirse de diablo, porque…el diablo es la figura masculina.	So, women can't dress as devils because…the devil is a masculine figure.
Don Fidel: Sí, sí. Por eso. Y allí, se visten mujeres, un hombre se viste de mujer pero la máscara, lo dejan vestir, pero es hombre.	Yes, yes. That's why. And then, women do dress. A man dresses up as a woman, but with a mask, that's why he can dress as a woman, but he's a man *[he laughs heartily]*.
Anne: Pero no hay mujeres que se visten de diablo.	But there aren't any women who dress as devils.
Don Fidel: No, no. No se visten.	No, no. They don't dress up
John: Entonces los hombres son más diablo que las mujeres.	So men are more devilish than women.
Don Fidel: Sí, aun más diablo que las mujeres.	Yes, even more devilish than women.[47]

[47] This is an excerpt from an interview John Emigh and I did with Don Fidel in 1998, a year before I went to live in Teloloapan. We were discussing what the devil means, and his relationship with men and the Mexican nation.

THE MACHO

> "Mexico [is] the Latin American country in which archetypes of masculinity and femininity are most intensely interwoven with mythologies of national self-definition" (Stern 1995: 20).

"Where are you from?"

"Texas, but I live in Chilpancingo."

"Are you married?"

"Yes."

"To a Guerrerense?"

"Yes."

"Wow. And he isn't a *machista*? (conversation between the author and a Mexico City cab driver)

Both the devil and the phantasm of Guerrero Bronco invoke images of aggressive masculinity, commonly glossed in both lay and academic discourse as "machismo," and expressed in the widespread belief (held by both Mexicans and non-Mexicans) that "Mexican men are machos." As is the case with Mexico Bronco, this attribution of negative characteristics to the nation as a whole is often qualified by statements along the lines of "Mexican men are machos, but some more than others," and the state of Guerrero is often cited as an example of the exaggeration of this aspect of "national character." Within Guerrero itself, one often hears, "Guerrerenses are machos, but especially those who live in the country or small towns," or, "My father (or grandfather) was a real macho, but times have changed." So, like the other two discursive tropes discussed in this chapter, the label of "macho" is typically attached to an Other in an attempt to establish the boundaries of social relationships and define oppositional identities.

The typical academic description of machismo defines this complex as the aspect of male personality that involves "exaggerated aggressiveness and intransigence in male-to-male relations and arrogance and sexual aggression in male-to-female relationships" (Stevens 1973: 90). It is characterized by "the outrageous boast, a distinct phallic symbolism, identification of the man with the male animal, and ambivalence toward women," and is often expressed in symbolic clothing and objects, such as hats, guns, horses and/or cars (Paredes 1993: 215).

While some authors have written insightful studies of masculinities in specific historical and cultural contexts without reference to machismo (see Herzfeld 1985, Godelier 1986, Allison 1994, for example), many social scientists have used the terms macho or machismo in reference to masculinities outside of Mexico and Latin America as part of a totalizing discourse about aggressive masculinity. David Gilmore, for example, bases his argument that Mexican machismo is an exaggerated version of masculinity, which he views as "ubiquitous, if not universal" (quoted in Gutman 1994: 9). Gilmore bases his description of Mexican masculinity on ethnographic data gathered through interviews with "Jesús Sánchez" and his family in the 1950's by anthropologist Oscar Lewis in Morelos and presented in the classic, if disputed, work *The Children of Sanchez*.[48] However, machismo as a universal version of masculinity, problematic even in specific Latin American contexts, has lead other authors to attempt to particularize machismo, arguing that the masculinities experienced and expressed by Mexican men are deeply implicated in class relations, geography, ethnicity, relations with the State, relations with women, and historical context (Stern 1995, Gutman 1996, Melhuus and Stølen 1996, Minello 2002).

[48] Gutman (1994) argues that, although some criticisms of Lewis' theories are valid, those who use his ethnographic as a means of arguing for an understanding of Mexican masculinity as homogeneously sexist, misread his work and generalize much more than Lewis himself.

Diverse authors have attempted to explain the origin of machismo in Mexico. These explanations have included blaming the tropical climate (Mendoza, in Paredes 1993: 215), Freudian theories of a national Oedipus complex due to the rape of Indian women by Spanish men (Ramos 1962, Paz 1985), men's psychological and physical alienation from the domestic sphere (Gilmore 1990), the transfer of the Mediterranean "honor-shame" complex to American soil (Peristiany 1966), the oppression of proletarian men in a class-stratified society (Wolf 1959, Peña 1991, Limón 1994), and the rise of nationalism (Wolf 1959, Paredes 1993).

Others have pointed to the ambivalent nature of the macho. According to one vision, the macho is a self-confident, honorable, respected man, who protects and provides for his family. From another point of view, the macho is a bully, a coward who hides his lack of self-esteem behind boastful and violent behavior. Mendoza refers to the first kind of macho as "authentic," although Paredes argues that this version of masculinity is not, in fact, machismo, but simply male courage, which is "celebrated in the folkongs of all countries" adding that, "admiration for the brave man who dies for the fatherland, for an ideal, or simply because he does not want to live without honor or without fame is found among all peoples. It is the heroic ideal in any time and in any country" (1993: 216).

This courage was referred to as *valentía* (valor) or *hombría* (manliness) rather than "machismo," and was an American version of the "honor and shame" complex well-known to Mediterranean scholars.[49] According to this code of conduct, men were judged by a combination of social status and personal honor, which "implied a cluster of visible accomplishments and postures: personal forcefulness, a valor embodied in strength of

[49] See the volume edited by J. G. Peristiany (1966), especially the article by Julian Pitt-Rivers.

will and sexual possessiveness; success as a ruler of households; and respect for rank and decorum" (Stern 1995: 14). Before this time, "macho" generally referred to the sex of a male animal, although it was apparently also a vulgar way of referring to manliness or virility (Gutman 1994: 12). Thus, the word "macho" has a relatively short history on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. An interesting aspect of Paredes' argument is the connection he draws between the rise of the figure of the macho and an increase in nationalism, "accompanied by sentiments of distrust and inferiority toward outsiders" (223). In this sense, machismo arises as a means of self-definition in the face of a hostile exterior world. The reverse is also true: machismo also becomes a way for outsiders to characterize Mexicans, often in racist terms. But the concept of the macho also comes into play within Mexican social structure, stratified by class and geography.

The classism and racism underlying the discourse of machismo is particularly evident in the writings of Samuel Ramos and Octavio Paz, Mexican intellectuals who played an important role in the construction of the Mexican National Character, or mexicanidad. Ramos, for example, argues that the *pelado*, or urban, mestizo, lower-class male, "constitutes the most elemental and clearly defined expression of national character" (1962: 58). The pelado flaunts his elemental impulses, is resentful and explosive, unstable, paranoiac, insecure, obsessed with his phallus, and excessively verbal as a form of self-affirmation based on the use of virility to counter his feelings of inferiority. Paz also argues that, as a means of validating himself psychologically, the lower class male uses the concept of penetration, verbal and physical, to wound and humiliate other men, symbolically turning them into women. In these "authoritative discourses" (Limón 1994), the lower class male body is de-legitimized, turned into an object of disgust and pity, symbol of a degraded national character whose roots lie in a history marked by conquest and "penetration" (literal and figurative) by outsiders.

Carlos Monsivais criticizes the concept of machismo that came into fashion in the late 1930's as a means of categorizing men of the lower classes, justifying their structural position in Mexican society. He writes,

> Machismo as a commercial spectacle emerges towards the end of the 1930's. In decorating established codes of behavior, it folklorizes and depoliticizes....the fact, for example, that the so-called 'love of death' is the product of the vulnerability of the popular classes is ignored....Consumer-machismo is, right from the start, the product of bourgeois ideology; and the starting point of their mass strategy is a class one: only the excess of physical bravery redeems the mortal sin of poverty (1997: 14-15).

Paredes, Monsivais and Limón are correct in their attack on machismo as an aspect of psychological character which is generally assigned to others: Mexican men, according to Anglo-Europeans; lower class Mexican men, according to elites; provincial or campesino men, according to those who live in Mexico City. However, in attacking the concept of machismo, they seem to have ignored the fact that machismo, when it refers to the cultural attitudes and structural inequalities that form the basis of male dominance over women, is not a recent phenomenon, despite the fact that the word has been in use only for a short time.

Many Mexicans I know who critique "machismo" do so from a feminist standpoint that recognizes and seeks to denaturalize male privilege. Writing about the construction, maintenance and consequences of sexism, some Mexican and Chicana feminists refer the construction of "the macho" (Lamas 1995, Lagarde 2003), the impact of "male dominance" (de Barbieri 2004) or the structure of "patriarchy" (Lagarde 2003) or a combination of all of these terms (García 1989). In daily discourse, it is common to hear the word "machista" (a person whose behavior and thought processes are immersed in machismo) rather than "macho" to refer to men who attempt to exert excessive control over women. Seen in this light, the term "machismo" comes into use not because of a

change in male behavior, but because of a change in attitude toward that behavior. *Valientes* are converted into machos when their masculinity becomes a problem to be criticized instead of a natural outgrowth of their sex. That is, what was once doxic, (what "goes without saying because it comes without saying") is transformed into orthodoxy or heterodoxy, depending on one's perspective (Bourdieu 1977: 167).[50] Machismo becomes a problem, especially for upper and middle class Mexicans threatened or disgusted by what they perceive to be lower class masculinity. In this sense, the discourse of machismo is similar to the discourses of the devil and Guerrero Bronco: series of myths imposed upon marginalized groups by those with the power to control and define them. But machismo is also increasingly criticized by the women who suffer from its effects, regardless of their class position.

In Teloloapan, do men dress as diablos because, being men, they can? Or does performing as diablos turn them into men? And what of the men who dress as female diablos? And the women who, despite Don Fidel's comments, dress as diablos? And the men and women who engage in other gendered performances? The idea of gender as something one does, rather than something one is, has been a recurring theme in feminist studies, at least since the 1980's (West and Zimmerman 1987, Butler 1990). Gender as practice and gender as essence are interwoven in Teloloapan: essentialist gendered discourse is at the heart of the ways in which men and women intervene in the fiestas patrias, particularly in the categories of "diablo" and "reina," but performance may also allow participants in the fiestas patrias to play with gender categories, contesting and reformulating their validity. In this chapter, I discuss the relationship between gender discourse, practice and performance in the context of the fiestas patrias.

[50] I don't mean to imply that hegemonic masculinities were never questioned or resisted before the twentieth century; no hegemony is absolute. But the representation of resistance in language is part of a new attitude toward what is usually referred to as machismo.

MASCULINITY AND LO *MEXICANO*

Richard Handler writes that nationalism is "an ideology concerned with boundedness, continuity, and homogeneity encompassing diversity. It is an ideology in which social reality conceived in terms of nationhood, is endowed with the reality of natural things" (1988: 6). Constructed categories like place, race and gender are often the most easily appropriated by the state in its project of nation building because they are already seen as biological, and therefore natural, categories—what Geertz would call "the givens" (1994: 31). In Mexico, gender has been one of the most common ways of constructing *lo mexicano*—what it means to be Mexican, according to those both scholarly treatises and popular culture—since the beginnings of the independence movement in the late eighteenth century. Gendered images and figures from each major period in Mexican history—the Conquest, the colonial period, Independence and the Revolution—have been used both to construct and critique "mexicanness." And gender may also be a way of constructing other kinds of differences, particularly race—the other major marker of *lo mexicano*.

As is the case for nationalist movements around the world, "Woman" in Mexico has been constructed in nationalist discourse as the site of the nation's reproduction, literally and figuratively. As such, women have also been seen as the site of resistance to foreign invasion, allied with a collective selfhood and linked to such sacred entities as "home" and "family." Their "natural" characteristics are said to include abnegation, natural sagacity, high moral being, noble inclinations, and perhaps most importantly, a maternal instinct (Schmidt 1977). Their historical role has tended to be passive; they represent values, but with a few exceptions, they are not perceived to be historical

actors.[51] It is important to point out here that this female image refers to the "good" woman, not the one who opens herself up to the outsider, letting herself be sexually conquered. The most common example of this version of Mexican femininity is La Malinche, mistress and translator of the conquistador Cortés. (see Paz 1985, Bartra 1992; for La Malinche as a conquistadora, see Salas 1990).

In contrast, the ideal Mexican man, as the literature on "lo mexicano" would have us believe, is an active figure, the external spirit of the nation. He is represented in historical characters like Cuauhtémoc, Vicente Guerrero, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, "valientes" who (in contemporary historiography) helped build the nation. The so-called "natural" gender qualities attributed to the ideal Mexican man and woman may be translated as ideal cultural values: masculine honor and valor, and feminine sacrifice and nurturing. Together, the ideal masculine and feminine constitute the nation, or what is often referred to as "la madre patria," the mother-fatherland (Franco 1989; see also Sommer 1991).

Although some anthropologists have attempted to examine Latin American gender identities within their social and historical contexts (see, for example, the essays in Melhuus and Stolen 1996, Balderston and Guy 1997, Gutman 1996, Brusco 1995, Hendrickson 1995), the scholarly literature on lo mexicano, as well as film, popular songs, and other elements of popular culture, have tended to focus on gendered images. These images include: the drunken macho who hides his inferiority complex behind a mask of bravado (Ramos 1962), the penetrating *chingón* whose model for masculinity is the Spanish conquistador who raped his Indian mother (Paz 1985), the laughing, pistol-

[51] Connell writes, "Conventional historiography recognizes, indeed presupposes, conventional femininity. What is hidden from it is the experience of spinsters, lesbians, unionists, prostitutes, madwomen, rebels and maiden aunts, manual workers, midwives and witches" (1987:188).

waving revolutionary who drinks, makes love, and fights Huertistas and Carrancistas[52] with equal zeal (Mendoza in Paredes 1967), the abnegated mother who sacrifices everything for her husband and children, the worthless prostitute who refuses to fulfill her true nature as a woman.

Gender ideology is deeply embedded in everyday life in Mexico. Cultural images like those mentioned above are "fixed" in the national imaginary, together with images of the humble campesino, the heroic (dead) Indian, the shadowy drug dealer, and other *mitos mexicanos* (Florescano 1995). But, clearly, discursive images rooted in ideologies of gender, geography, race and class are not faithful reflections of social reality. Yet they cannot be dismissed as simple stereotypes, with no connection to real bodies. The performances that take place as part of the fiestas patrias arise from and play with the content of the natural imaginary; they are, to a degree, structured by it and take part in its reproduction, although the reproduction is never automatic or complete, as we shall see. Gender performances and popular imagery exist in a dialectical relationship; each feeds into the other, and both may be changed through time and in space.

A LIFE HISTORY

In the nine months before Don Fidel's death, I got to know him fairly well. We had numerous conversations, and he told me much about his life. I include the general outlines of his story here, not because he was particularly representative of "the Teloloapense man," but because he was *el diablo mayor*, a product of his historical and social context, and complicit in the production of gender performance.

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[52] Huerta and Carranza were leaders of different factions during the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Both tried to dominate the army of Emiliano Zapata, the champion of agrarian reform. In Guerrero, the most important Zapatista leader was Jesús H. Salgado, who grew up in the municipio of Teloloapan (see Nájera 1994 for his biography).

Things were never easy for him, he told me. He was born in 1930, and his mother died when he was still very young. His father remarried, and wasn't around much, so Don Fidel "raised himself in the streets," although he did have the support of some family members. He got involved with the diablos in the 1950's, when they were still organized by barrio, each group separate and antagonistic toward the others. "*Me hizo su padre*," he told me, meaning that he dominated the unruly gangs and thus came to be the organizer of the tradition.

Around that time, he met Elia, a young girl from a nearby village and brought her back to Teloloapan as his wife. Apparently, there was some opposition from her family, but his charm and good looks won her over. He never held a steady job during his married life, but supported the family by working as a baker, a bricklayer and a mask-maker, among other occupations. Doña Elia helped out by taking in her neighbors' washing. They had eight children, but three boys died young, leaving them with five: Aurora, the oldest, Fidel, Rocío, Ángela, and Yanet. After suffering years of infidelity and economic instability, Don Fidel's wife left him and moved to Morelos. Their youngest daughter was born much later than the others, during a brief reconciliation between Don Fidel and Doña Elia. Aurora stayed in Teloloapan, working as a teacher in outlying communities. She married a campesino from Alahuixtlán, and they had eight children. Her husband currently lives in California with their second-oldest daughter. Aurora is now a teacher at the *Normal* in Teloloapan, and recently acquired her master's degree in pedagogy. Fidel was sent to Cuernavaca to study the *secundaria*, and lived with relatives. He returned to Teloloapan for the *preparatoria*, supporting himself by making masks, although his older sister sent him money when she could. He moved to Chilpancingo in 1980 to study engineering at the state college, and got married just out of school. He has two daughters with his first wife, and two daughters with me. His younger

sisters moved to Morelos with their mother. Rocío married just before she finished the secundaria, and had four children. Ángela and Janet came with Doña Elia to Chilpancingo after Fidel brought property and built a house. Ángela worked as a secretary, but then quit to get married and raise her four daughters. Yanet still lives with Doña Elia on part of Fidel's property. She has two young daughters.

Don Fidel stayed in Teloloapan, occasionally cohabiting with a woman, but generally living by himself, until 1978. According to what he told me, he was forced to leave town because he was falsely accused of raping a young girl. He hid out for a couple of months, and then called the judge, who told him not to worry because there wasn't a case. But then the girl's uncle "betrayed" him and tried to turn him in to the police. He went to Mexico City to escape the charges, and found work. He decided ten years later that no one was looking for him, and he returned to Teloloapan. He was told that he'd spent as much time in Mexico City as he would have spent in jail, and the girl's uncles had discovered that her mother had invented the whole story. He didn't have any trouble from her family.

About his marriage, Don Fidel told me that Doña Elia was always complaining of her health and didn't help him at all, and that their oldest daughter did all of the housework. Worse, she scolded him in front of her brothers. He felt he had to teach her to "respect" him. She was always jealous of the women he talked to, but she didn't understand that he had to talk to his clients in order to sell bread. "*Ahora*," he said, "*Yo soy el hombre más jodido y más respetado de Teloloapan*" (Now I am the most screwed and the most respected man in Teloloapan). Everyone esteemed him and knew he was a good man. He borrowed money from any and everyone, but wasn't ashamed or embarrassed in front of anyone. He treated everyone the same, rich or poor. But his oldest daughter didn't think much of him. And there were some "*viejas chismosas*" ("old

gossips") who spread rumors about him, saying that he had women in his house with the door closed. But they were his clients. The gossips were just envious, he said, because he was always being interviewed, or talking to *gringos*.

When Don Fidel died in 2000, the entire town came out to mourn him. He was, indeed, a well-respected man. I grieved as if I had lost a relative, and was forced to confront my own mixed feelings toward a man who, in many respects, represented what I felt to be the worst kind of masculinity. Yet he could be very kind and tender. Every night, a pack of neighborhood dogs would stop in at his house to receive their dinner: tortillas boiled with fresh milk. A few months after I moved to Teloloapan, a neighbor gave me a very small, black kitten. Don Fidel nursed it to health, feeding it from a bottle every hour and ripping up an old t-shirt for it to sleep in. On another occasion, he loaned his burial plot to a widow who had no place to bury her dead child. Despite my feelings about his treatment of women, I found him to be an attractive and charismatic figure.

THE DIABLO AND THE PERFORMANCE OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

Judith Butler writes, "gender is not a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" (1990: 270). What is the identity instituted by the "stylized repetition of acts" that constitutes the diablo contest in Teloloapan? Not all men dress as devils, and the masculinity performed by the devils is not representative of "the Mexican (or Teloloapense) man." But the diablo does play into a particular construction of masculinity which has dominated popular and scholarly discourse about men. Following Connell (1987), I will refer to this construction as "hegemonic masculinity," by which I mean a version of masculinity dominant within a particular geographic (the cabecera municipal of Teloloapan), ethnic (mestizo), age

(young performers and mature organizers) and class (generally working class) context. As used by Connell, hegemony "does not mean total cultural dominance, the obliteration of alternatives. It means ascendancy achieved within a balance of forces, that is, a state of play. Other patterns and groups are subordinated rather than eliminated" (1987: 184). It involves the creation of models based on fantasy, which may or may not correspond to real men's personalities. There are many ways to be a man in Teloloapan, but all gender identities are constructed in relationship to dominant discourse. Don Fidel comes close to embodying this model, but also escapes from its boundaries when he cooks tortillas for his dogs and condemns the drunkenness that often accompanies the diablo contest. His son Fidel flirts with the model when he participates in the contest, but he is also the primary care-giver for his youngest daughter. Other men involved in the competition play with hegemonic masculinities in different ways.

The diablo contest, like other rituals, both civil and religious, presents a strategic version of masculinity, not a model of it (Bell 1992: 91). Part of this strategy, as we will see in the next chapter, involves the construction of a local identity based on a particular configuration of place and history. But another part revolves around the production of a particularly masculine habitus.

The Concurso

HABITUS AND MALE BODIES

Bell writes that "the molding of the body within a highly structured environment does not simply express inner states. Rather, it primarily acts to restructure bodies in the very doing of the acts themselves" (1992: 100). The diablo contest is a practice that is conditioned by a particular structure of gender relations, which are in turn, nourished by particular gender discourses, which the practice itself helps to reproduce. But it is a particular kind of practice; that is, it is also performance. Although the term performance has recently been utilized to describe everything from a way of being in everyday life, to sports events, to the most sacred, highly ritualized practices (see Bauman and Briggs 1990, Bell 1992 and Beeman 1993), I feel that it is necessary to distinguish other modes of being-in-the-world from performance, which I see as the conscious, aestheticized practice of representation. The diablo contest is a performance of male bodies, brought into being by specific male bodies, whose aim is the construction of a particular kind of

male body. This performance is profoundly implicated in the structuring of a habitus, a "system of dispositions – a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles" and the "objective event," in this case, the diablo contest (Bourdieu 1977: 82-83). As Bourdieu writes, "It is the dialectical relationship between the body and a space structured according to the mythico-ritual oppositions that one finds the form par excellence of the structural apprenticeship which leads to the em-bodying of the structures of the world, that is, the appropriating of the world of a body thus enabled to appropriate the world" (ibid. 89).

The sharing of homosocial, male-dominated space (the *cueva del diablo*) and the combined acts of putting on cuera, belt, boots and gloves, of tying on the mask, of going up on stage, the physical endurance required to wear the mask, to crack the whip the right way and enough times to demonstrate diabolic, manly strength, the attitude and confidence needed to perform in front of an audience, the bravura and fearlessness displayed in a whip fight, the presentation of flowers or the mute offer of a promenade to a girl: material elements of a particular habitus that exists as one option for boys and men in Teloloapan. The production of this habitus is particularly salient in the context of the diablitos, the contest in which young boys learn how to become diablos, and something about how to be men.

THE MASK OF THE DIABLO

The most important material element of the diablo contest is the mask: an explosion of protrusions and colors that, as Don Fidel commented in the opening lines of this chapter, produces a transformation in the wearer, changing him from man to…what? Who is the "other" that is an essential component of masking (Emigh 1996)? The

literature on the practice of masking is rife with mystical explanations. Behalyi-Merin, for example, writes:

> When man puts on a mask he changes into another being and establishes the link between image and god, and between the living and the dead. The mask is the instrument of mysteries and esoteric cults. It conceals, frightens, doubles, separates and unifies: it is the Janus face of primeval godhead, the face of day with eyes open, or of night, with eyes closed; its expression symbolizes life and death at once. This arcane duality is the basis of all mask design…Man puts the mask on his face and transforms himself through invocation and identification. The wearer of the mask is possessed by the sublimity and dignity of those who are no more, he is himself and yet someone else. Madness has touched him – something of the mystery of the raving God, of a spirit of double existence which resides in masks, and whose last descendent is the actor (1971: 8-9).

Other authors are more circumspect. Shalleck defines the mask as "some alteration of the face – a change of appearance for purposes of protection, make-believe, social acceptance, disguise, amusement, or religious devotion" (1973: x). Mack constructs a tantalizing list of mask wearers, including "participants in ritual, healers, theatrical and carnival performers, wrestlers, ball guests, executioners and their victims, burglars and terrorists, the Ku-Klux-Klan, welders and surgeons, ice-hockey players and fencers" (1994: 10). Pernet limits his definition of the mask to "an object [which] covers all or part of the face in order to disguise the wearer or dissimulate his identity" (1994: 11).

According to Mesnil:

> The specific function of the mask is, we feel, to locate explicitly the action of the festival in an "organized order" which is defined in opposition to another order: the mask is the instrument, par excellence, of the break between the order of being (the routine social order of a given society) and the order of seeming or representation. In other words, the mask is used less for the purpose of disguise than as the instrument of an affirmation (1976: 12).

And Bakhtin argues that

> The mask is connected with the joy of change and reincarnation, with gay relativity and with the merry negation of uniformity and similarity; it rejects conformity to oneself. The mask is related to transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and familiar nicknames. It contains the playful element in life; it is based on a peculiar interrelation of reality and image, characteristic of the most ancient rituals and spectacles" (1968: 39-40).

Jedrej contends that a mask should be understood, not as an entity, but in terms of the relationship between what is revealed and what is concealed by the mask. He mentions three variants of mask systems, in which the mask is perceived as: a cover, veil or screen; an aesthetically elaborated object; or the combined effect of mask and face. In the first case, all emphasis is what is concealed by the mask; in the second, the mask-as-object becomes the focus; and in the third, both the mask and its wearer are equally significant (1980:221; see also Picton 1990). In the context of Teloloapan, the mask never merely conceals. When a devil mask is displayed in a museum, photographed for a magazine or poster, or sold to a collector, it is clearly taking part in the second of Jedrej's classifications: the materially elaborated object. Here, the mask is a handcrafted object which alludes to the skill of the mask-maker, as well as the identity of Teloloapan as a site for the production of cultural (and historical, for those who know the devils' background) patrimony. The mask-in-performance, in the context of the contest, the *recorridos* that continue throughout the following week, or special events that take placed in other towns, participates in the third of Jedrej's categories, in which both mask and wearer are highlighted.

Most authors agree that masking always involves a sense of identification between a self and an other. John Emigh invokes psychologist Melanie Klein's "me-not me" continuum in the context of masked performance. According to this linear model, "me" is an absolute value at one end of a continuum, while "not me" is the absolute value at the other end. The continuum looks something like this: ME → performance in

everyday life → pretending→ acting in character→visitation/possession→NOT ME (Emigh 1996: xvii).

But these theories of masking assume that there is a rupture between a clearly defined self ("me") and a clearly defined other ("not-me"). In the context of the Diablos of Teloloapan, it seems that the "other" represented by the diablo is really an extension of some aspects of the self, which is not necessarily an integral whole. It falls somewhere along the lines of "not-me – not-not-me." As Don Fidel put it, "you feel more *gallo*" (which doesn't mean that you weren't gallo to begin with). The "other" of the mask is, in this case, a composite of potential abilities and behavior, discursively linked with both the "macho" and the devil, although not completely commensurate with either.

The materiality and the aesthetic of the mask is a way of physically gigantizing the male body and imaginatively gigantizing the discourse of hegemonic masculinity (Stewart 1984). The body forms part of a classical aesthetic, on the one hand: contained and defined by the close-fitting cuera, which emphasizes the height and narrow waist of the (ideal) performer—outward signs of his male athletic prowess. But on the other hand, the devil-body is grotesque: exploded by the mask and extended by the *chicote*. The mask is carnivalesque: it spills over the limits of the everyday body, invading the personal space of everyone else. It is a profusion of miniatures: a head composed of smaller heads and other body parts, whose overall effect is overwhelming.[53] It is provocative, dangerous. A horn in the eye is a real danger for an innocent bystander or dance partner. The chicote, which could be imagined as a prosthetic penis, also intrudes into the space

[53] García Canclini mentions the "monumentalizing" effect of bringing together a large number of miniatures in the context of the National Museum of Anthropology and History (1995: 127).

of others. Poetic in his muteness, the diablo is a ludic figure, a mixture of classic and grotesque bodies, the miniature and the gigantic, both heimlich and unheimlich.[54]

THE DIABLO AND HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

I have referred to the version of masculinity presented/represented in the diablo contest as hegemonic masculinity. The "poetics of manhood" expressed by the diablos is tied to competition, strength, resistance and romantic conquest (see also Herzfeld 1985). But it is important to note that its status as hegemonic has been seriously threatened, although not defeated, by historical changes in gender ideologies. The "domestication" of the diablo is notable, from its early beginnings as the wild, untamable, aggressive, dangerous gang member, to the more controlled (but still potentially dangerous) symbol of the flower of Teloloapense manhood. As I mentioned in above, the term "macho" in its contemporary usage, arose only in the twentieth century. Some authors have used this fact to argue that the concept of machismo has been exaggerated, and does not correspond to real Mexican masculinities (Paredes 1993; Limon 1994). While I agree that social science has been complicit in the construction of the term and that it cannot be applied cross-culturally, I hesitate to disregard it as a potentially useful concept, particularly as it has evolved into a critique, both popular and scholarly, of aggressive masculinity and the subordination of Mexican women.

The hegemonic masculinity expressed in the diablo contest today is not the same as it was five years ago, much less fifty years ago. Different historical moments require different masculinities and femininities: the warrior diablos are products of both the

[54] Homi Bhabha writes that "heimlich" refers to "the pleasures of the hearth" whereas "unheimlich" implies the fear inspired by otherness (1990: 2). The diablos participate in both discourses, in that each mask consists of a series of representations of "others" (monsters, animals) that unite to create a representation of Teloloapense identity.

struggle for independence and the revolution of 1910, but their skills are less valued in twenty-first century Mexico. However, the discourse of hegemonic masculinity continues to be a forceful presence in Teloloapan and other parts of Mexico. Even so, the diablo is a slippery character, uncomfortable with strict definition. It is ultimately a fruitless task to pin down a figure long associated with trickery and resistance.

THE REINA AND THE PERFORMANCE OF EMPHASIZED FEMININITY

If the diablo represents one type of hegemonic masculinity, his female counterpart must be the Reina of the Fiestas Patrias.[55] Connell observes that there can be no such thing as "hegemonic femininity" in a social structure underpinned by masculine power, and instead refers to "emphasized femininity", by which he means those models of womanhood based on acceptance of subordination to men. The previous discussion of stereotypes such as "the abnegated mother" is an example of emphasized femininity. It is tempting to include the Reina in this category, and she indeed embodies some of its aspects. However, the gendered performance of the queen contest, like that of the diablo contest, is more subtle and difficult to define in absolute terms.

It is important to point out that the contest is not really a beauty pageant. It is meant to honor women who are not merely attractive, but are able to represent community values and traits (Lavenda 1996: 31). To be elected queen, it is expected that a contestant have a pleasing appearance and personality, but it is equally important that she be a competent speaker, knowledgeable about Teloloapan's history and traditions. Unlike the diablos, she cannot be mute; she must demonstrate verbal ability in a "classical" rather than "grotesque" way (Stallybrass and White 1986). She is meant to

[55] By 2008, the term "Reina" was no longer used. Instead, the three winning candidates were crowned the Señorita Patria, Señorita Libertad and Señorita América.

represent Teloloapan, in a particularly feminine mode.[56] Like the young boys who perform as devils, the young women involved in the queen pageant are learning the appropriate gender roles of their society; they are expected to display chaste beauty, intelligence about limited topics, and loyalty to their families, who have supported them in their dreams of being queens.[57] The candidates for Reina de las Fiestas Patrias are required to show that they are "cultured," according to Nestor García Canclini's definition: "To be cultured…is to grasp a body of knowledge—largely iconographic—about one's own history, and to participate in the stagings in which hegemonic groups have society present itself with a scene of its origin" (1995: 107).

The contest took place in two stages. First, the candidates presented a Mexican *traje típico*. The announcer described each dress as the candidates entered, and then the candidate was expected to introduce herself and explain why she was interested in local tradition and custom, demonstrating her level of "culture." The first candidate, dressed in "typical Guerrerense dress," spoke:

> I see myself as a passionate defender of this city's culture. And as a person…with a great sense of belonging to this city, since I have observed and respected its customs and traditions. I participate with the firm conviction that I will be well able to represent the Teloloapense woman of these times with these tasks ahead of her. Supported by all of you, I invite you to participate in these events and together, from now on, we will commit ourselves to the consolidation of our *mexicanidad*, always when it seeks to establish a relationship between the past, the present, and the future, we will necessarily have to confront the effects of the [links] between these, in their conceptual, defining, or other relations. We are a people with tradition, history, and projection toward the future. The Teloloapense citizen knows that he is part of national history, as he conserves for himself his

[56] Stoeltje points out that the "frivolity" of the beauty or queen pageant often masks the real power relations that the pageants involve and the way that they link the global to the local (1996:19).

[57] In Mexico, girls get the chance to compete in queen pageants from elementary school onwards. Each school has a queen for various occasions: the first day of spring and the Day of the Child, for example. Of course, the candidates are generally those whose parents can afford the high cost of participation. Since many of the contests honor the girl who can raise the most money for the school, parents may be expected to donate large sums, as well as pay for the dress(es), shoes, crown, and other accessories.

identity and his moral values. All of this is Teloloapan. It is culture, it is tradition, and above all, it is a good platform to project ourselves to the future. The simple revision of our past allows us to recognize our ancestors' noble and legendary spirit of rising up against the oppressor. Just to mention a few: the Abrazo of Acatempan realized the 10th of January in the year 1821 as the conclusion of the War of Independence. The defense of this plaza by the general Eutemio Pinzón in the year 1862; in his honor, today it bears his name. Teloloapan, without doubt, deserves the best of futures…[58]

Another candidate, wearing an elegant gown patterned after the formal wear of colonial "high society," introduced herself:

> I was born sixteen years ago in this majestic place of dreams and poetry. I am a mixture of Chontal, Cohuixca, Ixcuca and Mexica. I am Teloloapense. I have lived the history of my town in an Abrazo of Acatempan. I feel the arrival of spring under the best climate in the universe. The second Friday of Lent, I pass by Mexicapán and its *feria*. I follow the procession of Holy Week, and I arrive in El Calvario with my faith and hope. En the fiestas of August, I am a devout pilgrim. I dress up in color and tradition in Mexican September, and I shout with my people, "Long live Mexico!"…excited by the wind of liberty and love of our patriotic symbols. The last day of October and the first of November, I admire the beauty of the ofrendas of my town, which are, without doubt, the best. And I walk the night delighted by the creativity of human beings. December arrives. I break the *piñata* in the *posadas*, and I walk through the *colonias* and *barrios*, feeling the harmony of the people, who await the birth of the Messiah. And in any instant of the year, in the *cerro* which is legend and symbol: the Tecampana. Our Tecampana. And I am enchanted by its magic it rings out. And the sound of the drum and the rustic flute which accompany the dance of the Tecuanes in the

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[58] Me reconozco como una apasionada defensora de la cultura de esta ciudad. Así como una persona…con un alto sentido de pertenencia a la misma, ya que he observado y respectado sus costumbres y tradiciones. Participo con la firme convicción de que bien podré representar a la mujer Teloloapense de estos tiempos y en estos menesteres. Apoyada por el apoyo de todos Uds., los invito a que sean participes de estos eventos, y que juntos, desde ahora, nos comprometemos a la consolidación de nuestra mexicanidad, siempre que se pretenda establecer una relación entre el pasado y el presente y el futuro, necesariamente tendríamos que enfrentar los efectos de las vinculaciones entre éstos, ya sean de carácter conceptual, definitorio o de otra relación.…somos un pueblo con tradición, historia, y proyecciones hacia nuestro futuro. El ciudadano Teloloapense se reconoce también como parte de la historia nacional, toda vez que ha conservado para sí su identidad, y sus valores morales. Todo esto es Teloloapan. Es cultura; es tradición, y sobre todo, es una buena plataforma para proyectarnos al futuro. La simple revisión de nuestro pasado nos permite reconocer el noble y legendario espíritu levantario de nuestros antepasados. Esos valores son representados en algunos actos históricos. Sólo para mencionar algunos: el Abrazo de Acatempan realizado el 10 de enero, del el año 1821 como conclusión de la Guerra de Independencia. La defensa de esta plaza con el general Eutemio Pinzón en el año de 1862, en cuyo honor hoy lleva su nombre. Teloloapan, sin duda alguna, es merecedora del mejor de los futuros…

religious festivals of my town. And the mystery of the dance amazes me. I make way among the crowd to be a part of the fiesta of the diablos. I am amazed by the brilliance of their cueras, their masks, and their chicotes. And I run into my house, away from the demon who offers me his arm. And I am happy with my customs. Because I love you, Teloloapan. I love you because you bathe me with your sun and the blessed waters of your history…I enjoy your exquisite folklore and tradition. Because I am part of you. I am space and time. Because I am Tecampanera. Thank you, Teloloapan.[59]

A candidate dressed as a Conchera in the "typical dress of the Aztecs," presented herself:

> I am with you for the second time in this place, so that I can speak to you a little of our city of legend and tradition. Teloloapan, I consider that all of us as true-born Teloloapenses, have the duty and the obligation to know our historic past. It seems ironic, but it's true. A person that we all knew in this city, who was originally from Mexico City…he loved and cared for it [Teloloapan] so much, that one day he came to baptize this land the Capital of the Ideal Climate. I refer to Señor José Salgado, may he rest in peace. He was the owner of a very nice store in the center of Teloloapan. This store was called "The Pearl of the Pacific." Let us take his example and value what we have. Did you know that the creator of the diablos was not from these lands either? Remember that he was General Pedro Ascencio Alquisiras, who had the idea to disguise his people in order to take the plaza of Teloloapan. Very well. The General Pedro Ascencio de Alquisiras was originally from the State of Mexico. Historical circumstances made him come to this land in order to defend it from the oppressor. Sadly, not everyone in Teloloapan knows the different versions that exist about the diablos. I invite you

[59] Nací hace 16 años en este majestuoso lugar del sueño y de poesía. Soy mezcla Chontal, Cohuixca, Ixcuca y Mexica. Soy Teloloapense. He vivido la historia de mi pueblo en un Abrazo de Acatempan. Siento llegar la primavera bajo el mejor clima de todo el universo. El segundo viernes de Cuaresma, me paso por Mexicapán y su feria. Sigo la procesión de la Semana Santa, y llego hasta El Calvario con mi fe y mi esperanza…En las fiestas de agosto, soy devota y peregrino. Me visto de color y tradición en septiembre mexicano, y grito con mi gente, "¡Viva México!"…emocionado por el viento de libertad y el amor por nuestros símbolos patrios. El último día de octubre y el primero de noviembre, admiro la belleza de las ofrendas de mi pueblo, que son sin duda alguna, las mejores. Y camino la noche en el deleito de la creatividad de los seres humanos. Llega diciembre. Rompo la piñata en las posadas, y vago por las colonias y barrios, sintiendo la armonía de la gente, que esperan el nacimiento del Mesías. Y en cualquier instante del año, en cumbres y el cerro, que es leyenda y símbolo. La Tecampana. Nuestra Tecampana. Y quedo encantada con su magia que suena. Y suena el tambor y la flauta rústica que acompañan la danza de los Tecuanes, en las fiestas religiosas de mi pueblo. Y me asombra el misterio de la danza. Me abro paso entre la muchedumbre, para ser parte de la fiesta de los diablos. Me asombro con el colorido de su cuera, su máscara y su chicote. Y corro del brazo del demonio por la casa. Y me siento feliz de mis costumbres. Porque te amo Teloloapan. Te amo porque me baño con tu sol y en las aguas benditas de tu historia….Disfruto de tu exquisito folclor y tradición. Porque soy parte de ti. Soy espacio y tiempo. Porque soy Tecampanera. Gracias Teloloapan.

all to read them so that we take back something of our past, and in that way, we will feel proud. Did you know that our city is located 1720 meters above sea level? That is why we have such a marvelous climate. There is something else I should say. You all, and each one of us, has admired the beautiful castle that Teloloapan has. It's true. It isn't ours. It belongs to a family who, sadly, hasn't known how to value it properly, and they are destroying it with remodeling. I, from this place and in the most attentive way, ask that they not continue destroying it, that they value that historic jewel, because there, it represents our history. There is something else. Not long ago, I went to the Tecampana. And do you know what? ….We are destroying it. There are people who have left the marks of their presence, and they have painted that place without pity. Authorities come, authorities go, and no one does anything to protect that legendary cerro. I invite you all, young people, because not only the authorities have the obligation to thank our city, so that everyone, and each one of us as young people, do something for that Tecampana, which is the pride of the Teloloapenses. To my companions, I wish you all the luck in the world, and I tell you that we are all winners. Thank you for having listened to me, and I hope you have a good night.[60]

The next candidate, dressed as a Charro, listed Teloloapan's characteristics, natural resources, cultural attractions. She then spoke of women's role in Teloloapan:

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[60] Por segunda ocasión estoy con Uds. en este lugar con la finalidad de hablarles un poco acerca de nuestra ciudad de leyenda y tradición. Teloloapan, considero que todos como Teloloapenses bien nacidos, tenemos el deber y la obligación de conocer nuestro antepasado histórico. Parece irónico, pero es verdad. Una persona quien todos conocimos en esta ciudad, que era originario de la ciudad de México. La amó y la quiso tanto, que algún día llegó a bautizar esta tierra como la capital del clima ideal. Me refiero al señor José Salgado, que en paz descanse. El era propietario de una comosidísima tienda en el centro de Teloloapan. Esta tienda se llamó "La Perla del Pacífico". Retomemos este ejemplo, y valoremos lo que tenemos. ¿Sabían que el creador de los diablos tampoco era de estas tierras? Recuerden que el fue el General Pedro Ascencio Alquisiras, quien tuvo la idea de disfrazar a su gente para tomar la plaza de Teloloapan. Pues bien. El General Pedro Ascencio de Alquisiras era originario del Estado de México. Las circunstancias históricas le hicieron llegar a estas tierras para defenderla del opresor. Lamentablemente, no todos los de Teloloapan conocen las diferentes versiones que existen sobre los diablos. Los invito a leerlas para que retomemos un poco nuestro antepasado, y así nos sentamos orgullosos. ¿Sabían que nuestra ciudad se encuentra a 1720 metros sobre el nivel del mar? Por eso tenemos este clima tan maravilloso. Hay algo más que debo decir. Uds. y cada uno de todos han admirado este hermoso castillo que tiene Teloloapan. Es cierto. No es nuestro. Pertenece a una familia que lamentablemente no lo ha sabido valorar, y lo están destruyendo con remodelaciones. Yo, desde este lugar, y de la manera más atenta, les hago llamado que no lo sigan destruyendo, que valoran esa joya histórica, porque allí, nos representa nuestra historia. Hay algo más. Hace poco, fui a la Tecampana. ¿Y saben que?….Lo estamos destruyendo. Hay personas que han dejado las huellas de su presencia, y han pintado ese lugar sin misericordia. Autoridades van, autoridades vienen, y nadie hace nada para proteger ese cerro legendario. Les invito jóvenes, porque no solo las autoridades tienen la obligación de agradecer a nuestra ciudad, para que todos y cada uno de nosotros como jóvenes, hagamos algo por esa Tecampana, que es el orgullo de los Teloloapenses. A mis compañeras, les deseo toda la suerte del mundo, y les digo que todas somos ganadoras. Gracias por haberme escuchado, y que tengan muy buenas noches.

> In spite of the fact that many have tried to take away from women's participation in different aspects of life, without fear of equivocation, women have occupied an important place alongside men. Since very remote times, they have intervened in the fight for Independence. They have also intervened in the social division of work, where it is their part to contribute to the sustenance of the family. In our beautiful and historic country, women play a very important part, above all in the struggles to achieve [Mexico's] emancipation. Clearly, we see this in the stage of Independence, where they actively contribute strategic ideas. We have testimony to this in Doña Josefa Ortiz de Dominguez and Leona Vicario. This shows us that women have aptitudes that allow them to participate in any event: political, social, and cultural. And if they are given the opportunity to educate themselves, they will achieve anything. Let us remember that the best women are not those who have waited for opportunities to come to them, but those who have taken advantage [of the opportunities they have].[61]

One candidate wore a dress painted and embroidered with Teloloapense symbols: the Tecampana, the *parroquia* of La Asunción, and the prehispanic glyph representing Teloloapan.

> To speak of our beautiful southern land is to refer to a lovely place, enchanting by excellence and hospitable by tradition. The pastoral geography of the state of Guerrero surrounds a city of legend, of an extraordinary climate, and of a beautiful folklore. This is our Teloloapan. Lovely little corner that still conserves that magic touch of mysticism…[62]

She goes on to detail the history of Teloloapan from the times of the Chontales to the most recent public works inaugurated by the municipal president.

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[61] A pesar de que ha habido mucho empeño por restarle participación a la mujer en diferentes aspectos de la vida, sin temor a equivocarme, ha ocupado un destacado lugar al lado del hombre. Desde tiempos muy remotos, ha intervenido en la lucha por la Independencia. Ha intervenido también en la división social del trabajo, cuando a ella le corresponde contribuir al sostén de la familia. En nuestro hermoso e histórico país, la mujer juega un papel muy importante, sobre todo en las luchas por lugar su emancipación. Claramente, lo vemos en la etapa de la Independencia donde participa activamente aportando ideas estratégicas. Testimonio de esto, lo tenemos en doña Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez y Leona Vicario. Esto nos demuestra, que la mujer está apta para participar en todo tipo de acontecimientos, tanto políticos, sociales, y culturales. Y si se le da la oportunidad de prepararse, lo logrará… Recordemos que las mejores mujeres no son aquellas quienes han esperado las oportunidades, sino las quienes las han aprovechado.

[62] Hablar de nuestra bella tierra suriana es referirnos a un hermoso lugar, encantador por excelencia y hospitalario por tradición. El agreste geografía del estado de Guerrero se (?) una ciudad de leyenda, poseedora de un extraordinario clima, y de un bello folclor. Ese es nuestro Teloloapan. Rinconcito hermoso que aún conserve este toque mágico de misticismo.

The next stage of the contest is the presentation of the candidates in evening gowns. During this stage, they are asked questions about social issues, randomly selected by number. The selected issues included: abortion ("Well, one can speak of abortion in religious, moral, and social terms, but it is ultimately a matter of choice"), education for Mexican women ("We have the same rights as men, and education is fundamental. If we don't have it, it is because of the machismo that exists in our country"), the consolidation of the family as a social institution ("Family is the most important thing in our lives. Our parents teach us the bases of life, education, respect, and many other things. Thanks to my parents, who have supported me up until now, I feel very good, I feel realized as a woman"), contemporary youth fashion ("We all like to dress in style. Each of us dresses in today's fashions as we like. I really like today's fashions and I hope they continue so that both women and men can look good"), moral values and today's youth ("It's something that we should always be thinking about. It is very important, as having values is something that completely defines you as a woman. It decides your personality and your character. It is influenced by your family. My family, particularly my mother, has shown me a good road to follow"), and education in Teloloapan ("Our education is very good, as long as there is a relationship between the student, the parents, and the teacher. This is very important, so that our students can continue to improve day by day").

The opening speeches and the interview phase of the contest allow the participants to show that they are "cultured" by displaying their knowledge both of current affairs and, more importantly, elements of local history, culture and natural resources. They mention the Tecampana, the Diablos, the weather ("the ideal climate" of Teloloapan), the indigenous past and Independence heroes such as Pedro Ascencio and Doña Josefa Ortíz de Domínguez. Various candidates appeal to the public's sense of local

pride and exhort listeners to rescue those aspects of cultural and natural patrimony which are being threatened by modernity or indifference.

In the past, there have been some conflicts over the judging process. Many people feel that the judges may play favorites, voting for a friend or relative instead of for the most deserving candidate. So for the contest of 2000, the authorities invited judges from outside of Teloloapan to be part of the contest. These judges included the municipal president of Ixcapuzalco, the Secretary of Tourism from Taxco and Iguala's Queen of the Flag and former Miss Guerrero, among others.

The sixth place candidate received a certificate for her participation. The fifth place candidate was named Señorita Patria, the fourth place candidate was named Señorita Independencia, the third place candidate became the Duquesa de las Fiestas Partrias, the second place candidate was named Princesa de las Fiestas Patrias, and the young woman who came in first was crowned Reina de las Fiestas Patrias. This year (2000), Alejandra,[63] the candidate who wore the colonial dress and spoke of her indigenous roots in Teloloapan, was the winner. Not everyone was completely satisfied. There were many in the audience who felt another candidate should have won, and that candidate also complained of the judges' unfair deliberation, but was later criticized in the local paper, *La Voz Tecampanera* (24 September 2000) for not accepting her defeat gracefully. The author of the article accused her of staining the memory of Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos, heroes of Mexico's Independence.

[63] All queens and candidates are referred to by pseudonyms.

REINA DE LAS FIESTAS PATRIAS, REINA DE LOS DIABLOS

After the two days of official celebrations, another opportunity arose for the members of Teloloapan's royalty. For the past few years, the devils have chosen a queen of their own to preside over the dance they sponsor on the last night they perform. The Reina de los diablos is often, although not always, the elected Queen of the Fiestas Patrias. In 1999, there was some confusion over who would be Queen. The diablos had decided that Mónica, who had been Reina de las Fiestas Patrias, would also be Reina de los diablos, and so they invited her to participate. But when she arrived in the plaza, escorted by the devils, she found another queen waiting for her. This one had also been invited to be Reina de los Diablos, although we never found out exactly by whom, perhaps by someone in the ayuntamiento. The second queen, Raquel, had been elected Princess of the Fiestas Patrias. Both women were highly offended, and their families got involved in the dispute. Fidel decided that they should have two queens, but the two women did not support his decision. Raquel appealed to Eva, who had been Queen of the Fiestas Patrias and of the diablos the year before (she had been invited to ceremonially pass her crown to the next queen, but also by Fidel, who mistakenly thought that she was the current queen). Mónica then left, and Raquel was crowned queen. Frustrated, Fidel declared that next year, no one outside the diablos' organization would be involved in the selection of the diablos' queen.

In 2000, there were also problems with the selection. Several of the candidates for Reina de las Fiestas Patrias wanted to be the Queen of the Diablos. The father of the Duchess, the candidate who many felt should have won the contest, came by Don Fidel's house to ask if his daughter could be elected. Alejandra I also wanted to be Queen of the diablos. The diablos decided that they would elect whoever donated the most to their organization (in terms of food or money). Alejandra offered a dinner on the day before

the final dance, so the devils decided she would be their queen. Some felt that, since in their opinion Casandra was unfairly deprived of her crown, she should be elected queen of the devils, but these devils were outvoted. The majority seemed more interested in the material benefits of having a queen than the feelings or qualities of the young woman in question.

The queens' duties are mainly iconic after their elections. They preside over the cultural program that precedes the Grito de Independencia, and they ride in a float in the parade of September 16th. That afternoon, along with their courts, they sat at the table of honor during the devil contest. Usually, they participate as judges, although in 2000, Fidel decided not to give the queen or her court ballots, since (though they may be "cultured") they are not really knowledgeable about what it takes to be a devil. That year, he also excluded local politicians on the same grounds, only naming judges who had at one time participated as devils. After the contest, the queen and her court are often invited to dance with the diablos while the results are tallied. About a week later, the Reina de los diablos is carried from her house to the plaza for the last dance, where she is crowned, then seated on stage and attended by her diabolic "subjects."

Occasionally, the queen of the civic festivals of a particular town will attend events in other towns in her capacity as sovereign and representative, but this rarely happens in Teloloapan. The Teloloapense Queen of a particular year tends to enjoy her reign for a few days, and then she returns to private life. Unlike the devils, she rarely ventures out to represent her town to other parts of Mexico, much less the world. Most continue their studies, although some find other work. Eva I, for example, is now one of the presenters on the local television channel.

As Stoeltje points out, by performing gender, contestants in queen pageants "imbue 'naturalness' into political constructs like 'nation' and 'citizen'" (1996: 8). The

focus on dress draws attention to the gendered body, marking the wearer as an object of display. In Teloloapan, dress is connected to local identity; several dresses embroidered with icons of the town are displayed behind the contestants. During the rest of the year, these dresses are on display in the local museum. [64]

The queen contest of the fiestas patrias highlights the "classical female body"; the queen and her court represent the ideals of patria, liberty, female beauty, the ideal Teloloapense woman. They sit in their thrones on stage during the Grito de Independencia, smiling down upon their subjects, the common people who overflow the space of the zócalo, pushing against one another, the vulgar masses, drunk on patriotism and Don Pedro. The queen is raised up above this writhing, shouting, dancing crowd. She is a disembodied body, as Stallybrass and White might claim, to be gazed at from below (Stallybrass and White 1986; Noyes 1993: 145). She also combines the paradoxical characteristics of nobility and democracy.

"Beauty contests are places where cultural meanings are produced, consumed, and rejected, where local and global, ethnic and national, national and international cultures and structures of power are engaged in their most trivial but vital aspects" (Cohen 1996: 8). Stoeltje argues that beauty and queen contests represent "a ritual response to changing gender relations" (1996: 4) and that the "frivolity" perceived to permeate these contests masks the real power relations that underlie them. She writes,

As a ritual that targets young women and attempts to harness their powers to social purposes, the beauty contest reflects the uncertainty, change, and contradictions inherent in contemporary systems of gender signification. It identifies both the fundamental principles by which modern society sustains a system in which women are

[64] See Hendrickson 1995 for a discussion about the relation between *traje*, gender and identity.

subordinated, and points to the channels of power potentially available to women for the transformation of systems of gender signification into those which liberate rather than subordinate" (1996: 28).

THE *VIEJA DE LOS DIABLOS*: TRANSGRESSION OR PARODY?

The *Vieja*, the boy or man who dresses in drag and portrays a "diabolic woman," complements, and perhaps challenges, the devils' masculinity. Unlike the hybrid diablo, the Vieja is purely grotesque; her body does not participate in any way in a classical male aesthetic. The word "vieja" is used in Mexico to refer either to an old woman or, more generally, to any woman. A man might refer to his wife as his vieja (and she might refer to him as her viejo). Women chatting with each other might be called viejas chismosas (gossipy women), gossip being seen (not entirely accurately) as a female activity. A woman who asks a man (a husband, a son) to do a household chore receives the response, "What am I, a vieja?" A mother or father might say to a young boy who cries or who plays with a doll or other "feminine" toy, "No seas vieja."

The vieja de los diablos, the devils' old lady, puts a different spin on the excessive behavior of the diablos. She is surely a devil: she makes the same noises and carries a chicote, just like the diablos. But she wears a skirt, carries a handbag, and her bra is stuffed with socks. Her mask is much simpler than those of the other devils: it has two horns, white skin, heavily rouged cheeks and lips, and a lasciviously extended tongue. She covers her head with a blond or white wig instead of a piece of animal skin. In all, she exudes excessive femininity rather than excessive diabolism. In the past, viejas have taken part in the devil contest, although their lighter masks put them at a disadvantage for

winning prizes. The vieja's real job is to be a clown, to flirt with the other devils and with male members of the audience, drawing them out to dance or to promenade.[65]

Some men and boys have a natural talent for performing as the vieja that doesn't necessarily reflect on their sexual preference. In fact, it is often the most "masculine" man that makes the best vieja, the man who is skilled in *relajo*, in *albures*, in jokingly attacking the masculinity of other men. This last skill is, after all, the function of the vieja, who simultaneously relinquishes and reinforces her masculine gender. I only knew of one boy whose sexuality was more ambiguous who liked to dress up as the vieja. There are also those men and boys who are very serious and quiet in real life but transform into raucous, flirtatious drag queens when they put on the mask and costume.

Men often talk of dressing as the vieja with a mixture of pride and embarrassment. The vieja's presence makes the diablos *lucir*; she attracts attention and entertains the audience. Some men and boys enjoy the opportunity to clown around and to be the center of attention. Others say they would never take on the part of the vieja. One young man said, laughing, "with all those devils grabbing you…no."

Mario Barrera, director of a local primary school, dressed as the vieja for many years, starting when Fidel was a little boy. He told me he had been fascinated by the vieja since he was a child. When he went out as the vieja, from the mid 1960's until the 1970's, he wore a rubber Halloween mask and a long wig, and borrowed the rest of the costume from a female relative: a dress, shoes, stockings. A good vieja knows how to "make certain characterizations, to be funny, to joke with the children." "You have to be good with the whip and to be able to move in a kind of exaggerated way, to attract people's attention." I asked what kind of person made the best vieja.

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[65] According to Mateo Antúnez, Don Fidel introduced the vieja to the diablo tradition. In Mexico and Guerrero, many dances feature a similar transvestite character.

> I think that they are qualities that people have. A comic charm, no? Because, for example, there are devils who are very dry, no? Who go walking along, and nothing. So, that also has a lot to do with it. Qualities, no? Sometimes, one can't, act, more than anything. It has to be a person with that imagination, to be able to cause that sensation. Before, one played around a lot, but in a good way. A devil didn't have to drink to be able to do it. Now, sometimes we realize that they have to drink alcohol or smoke [marijuana]…[66]

Don Angel dressed as the vieja for many years when he and Don Fidel were young, twenty years before Mario. Once, I asked him why he had chosen to dress as the vieja rather than as a diablo, and he said that he had originally dressed as a diablo, but that the other devils pressured him into being the vieja because they knew that he was "*muy relajista*" (a real joker). (He also mentioned that not all men had the "elegance" needed to be a devil.) Once, he said, the devils were invited to participate in the Feria of Taxco, but he had to harvest his corn and wouldn't be able to go. But Don Fidel got all of the other devils to go to his *milpa* and help him finish the harvest so that he would be able to go with them to Taxco. You have to have a certain ability to be the vieja, he said. Not just anybody can do it. You have to be able to *echar relajo* (joke around) and dance with the devils. Nowadays, the devils just walk around with the vieja. It was much better before, when the devils were "*agresivo y grosero con la gente*" (aggressive, and rude to people). They aren't as fierce as they used to be; now they just flirt with the girls. Then he told me the story of the time he had dressed up as the vieja and gone into a shoe store to *echar relajo* with the clientele. One woman had a basket with her, as she had been doing her shopping. He grabbed it and, using it as a prop, walked off down the street. Later, he couldn't find the woman it belonged to. He looked in the basket and found that

[66] Yo creo que son cualidades que tienen las personas. Gracia, ¿no? Porque por ejemplo, hay diablos que son muy secos, ¿no? Que van caminando y, nada. Entonces, ahí también tiene que ver mucho eso. Pues cualidades, ¿no? Que a veces no puede uno… actuar, más que nada. Tiene que ser una persona con esa imaginación, de causar esa sensación. Antes, hacía relajo uno, pero bonito. No necesitaba tomar un diablo para poder hacerlo. A veces nos damos cuenta que tienen que tomar alcohol o fumar…

it contained a wallet with about two hundred and fifty pesos (in terms of today's pesos, not the old ones). He put the wallet in his pocket, and then gave the basket to someone else to get rid of. When he changed out of his costume, no one knew he was the one who had taken the wallet, so he got away with it, and the lady never filed a complaint with the authorities. No, the devils are too tame now.

In his analysis of an incident of playful transvestitism in Nicaragua, Roger Lancaster asks if we should read a heterosexual man playing as a woman in an exaggerated fashion as a transgression or intensification of gender norms (1997: 11). As a mechanism of parody, the Vieja of the Diablos is, in general, a conservative figure that does not question either hegemonic masculinity or femininity. In this practice, the male actor (the "me") controls the representation of woman (the "not-me") in a "complex identity play of selfing through othering the other" (Rampton, quoted in Arnaut 2008). The Vieja puts the "transgressive woman" in her place; he/she slips into a female character, but has the power to return to his hegemonic gendered position. However, the Vieja does point to the possibility that gender is not a stable identity emanating from male or female sexed bodies. As Lancaster argues, gender performance, as differentiated from everyday gender practice, can be seen as mimetic *excess*, which

> effects a rapid shuttle between shifting subject matters: between male and female, between femininity and effeminacy, between the real and the imaginary, between the given and the impoverished. It is thus not quite correct to say that transvestitism defines a space of parody or transgression. Nor is it correct to say that it represents a ritual of intensification. Rather, it represents a profound equivocation. It takes up a space in-between. Contrary, even antagonistic, intentions are held in suspension, but nothing is canceled out. Not only are multiple intentions refracted through a given gesture, but, moreover, many possible selves—and others—are always *in play* (ibid. 15).

ROMPIENDO MITOS: THE FEMALE DIABLO AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF GENDER PERFORMANCE

> "You who have received culture as a gift and carry it with you as something natural, incorporated into your being, act as what you are, an heir" (García Canclini 1995: 135).

The contest of September 16, 2000 was a historic event in Teloloapan. About twenty devils participated, the same number as the year before. The following description comes from my notes and video taken of the contest:

Before the contest begins, the devils come out on stage to present themselves. They are accompanied by two young boys dressed as devils, who had participated in the contest of the diablitos; the announcer, Agustín Morales, declares, "You have before you, ladies and gentlemen, two little ones who will continue this tradition, who will participate in this contest when they grow up." The devils continue to dance around to the sound of the latest popular music hits, as the final details are organized. Agustín reads the names of those present at the table of honor: the municipal president and members of his cabinet, the Reina de las Fiestas Patrias and her court, me, the judges selected by Fidel.

The contest begins, and, as in years past, each diablo comes onstage to be judged on his dress, presentation, and ability and resistance with his chicote. Many offer flowers to their Highnesses (perhaps more to the Duchess Casandra, who some felt should have won, than to Queen Alejandra) and throw sweets to the audience. One chooses to show his comic side, falling on his knees to pray for divine inspiration. Agustín says, laughing, "Oh, no! Here we have a sacrilegious devil!" Others focused on the fierce aspects of their characters, growling and shaking their fists at the public. Still others chose to be "sexy" diablos, dancing suggestively to the recorded pop music (in English and Spanish) and lifting their cueras to show off their better qualities.

Participating in his first contest, Fidel's seventeen-year old nephew wears his mask with the eagles. His presentation is good, but the heavy mask proves to be too much for him, and he only cracks the chicote a few times. Fidel had hoped his nephew would be the one to take his place as the champion diablo, but this year, it is not to be.

Diablo number fourteen comes on stage. He flicks his chicote threateningly at the audience, and then dances suggestively to the music, crouching down to show off his mask, which is large, and features green and yellow parrots as the only figures. He shakes out his chicote and then starts to crack it, but after a couple of times, it gets tangled up in his horns. He makes a gesture of frustration, and takes the whip in his left hand to try again. He is a little more successful this time, but still doesn't crack the whip with enough force to gain many points. His turn over, he starts toward the exit but has a hard time seeing where he needs to go, so he stops, confused. Agustín says, "What is it, diablo? Tell me, the stage is yours." The diablo walks over to him and speaks in his ear. Agustín pauses, an expression of surprise on his face, and says into the microphone, "Ah, Oh…A surprise for you and for me. Ladies and Gentlemen, Public in general, Beautiful People accompanying us tonight…" The diablo stops in the center of the stage and strikes a coquettish pose. "Diablo number fourteen…is a lady! Applause, please! A lady who has come to revolutionize this contest of diablos! Women also participate in this contest!" The diablo leaves the stage, and Agustín continues, "But a historical precedent has been set today in the Traditional diablos! For the first time, and exclusively in the beautiful city of Teloloapan, Guerrero, a myth has been broken. A woman has participated in this contest of diablos. Applause from the women!" And the women do applaud and shout their support. Many of the men are also laughing and clapping.

The rest of the contest has fewer surprises to offer. Fidel performs last, in a mask he had only finished a few hours before. The mask has four jaguar figures on each side

with an Eagle Knight and a Jaguar Knight as the two central figures. One eye features the Tecampana, while the other has a representation of the river that is said to flow under Teloloapan. Two miniature devils sprout from the mask's underside. He performs well with the chicote, although not like when he was a younger man. He wins first place, while one of his cousins takes second, and one of the "Mudos" takes third. The Mudos are a family of mask makers, distant cousins of the De la Puentes, and Fidel's main rivals. Don Fidel taught the head of the family the art of mask-making, but there are some bad feelings between his sons and Fidel. They always perform well, and usually win one of the prizes. After Fidel wins this contest, the Mudos are angry and declare they will no longer participate in the tradition outside of the contest.

But when the contest is over, people continue to talk about diablo number fourteen. The young woman was Ivonne de la Puente Ramirez, Fidel's sixteen year old daughter, and my stepdaughter. She had been come to live with us from Chilpancingo, and had just started attending the local high school. For several months, she had been helping her father make miniature devils, and few people could tell the masks she made apart from those made by her father. She is attractive and intelligent, a flirt, and easily bored in school. Ivonne is athletic, headstrong, and "has the devils in her blood" (a phrase which, as an anthropologist, I use as a metaphor for constant exposure since birth to a tradition which her grandfather and her father maintained. However, members of her family, her father in particular, say the tradition is in the blood in a literal sense.) In short, she reunites all of the characteristics necessary to being a good devil except the one previously thought vital: a penis.

After the contest, Juan Morales invited her and Fidel to participate in a local television program he was producing about the fiestas patrias. On the air, he and Fidel reminisced about the way the diablos used to be. Juan said that, once when he was a boy

a diablo cut him with a whip lash. He went crying to Don Fidel, who told him to stop crying and learn how to take it. He asked Fidel what his father would have thought of a woman participating as a diablo. Fidel laughed and said he didn't know. Maybe since it was his own granddaughter he wouldn't have said anything, but in general, he probably wouldn't have appreciated the innovation. Then Juan asked Ivonne why she had decided to dress as a devil, and she replied that she did it to please her father, since he didn't have any male children, yet. The tradition of the diablos is in her blood, she said, just as it is in her father's blood.[67] (At this, Fidel had to swallow the lump that had come to his throat.) She said she really enjoyed dressing as a diablo, and that she wanted to prove that women could be devils, too. She didn't do as well as she would have liked, because she hadn't practiced enough. Juan joked that it would be a funny image to see a diablo walking around in the zócalo with a young man on his arm, and asked Fidel what he would think about that. Fidel replied that he would probably think what everyone else was thinking. As the program ended, Juan asked Ivonne if she had anything else to add, and she said that she wanted to prove that women could be devils, and that men and women should be equal.

A few days later, after the diablos' season had come to an end for the year, Fidel decided to let the young boys and women who wanted to dress up as diablos have a chance to perform. He told those who were interested to come to the house in the afternoon, where he would provide masks and cueras. The next afternoon, Don Fidel's house was mobbed. The majority was young boys, but quite a few girls and young women showed up as well. One of them was twelve-year old Emilia, who I liked immediately. As we were talking, she told me that she had been dressing as a devil for

[67] The idea that culture is passed in the blood is not necessarily opposed to the concept that culture is learned in performance. See chapter six for more on the concepts of blood, culture and performance.

several years now, although just in the zócalo. For the most part, only her family knew she dressed as a devil, although once, she told me, her hair slipped out from under the towel, and people said, "Oh, it's a girl." When they asked who she was, those who knew her said, "It's Emilia, Esteban's daughter." (Esteban is an old friend of Fidel's; he also used to dress as a devil.) Another time, there was a little girl who couldn't find a diablo to dance with, so Esteban told Emilia to dance with the girl. Her hair slipped out again, and everyone formed a circle around her, but the little girl ran away because she didn't want to dance with another girl. Emilia's brother, also Esteban, doesn't like the idea of his sister dressing as a devil. He says that girls who do that are *marimachos* (manly women, or sometimes, lesbians).

The gang of boys and young women paraded through various neighborhoods dressed as devils, and when the people found out that they were not men, many came out to take pictures. They then arrived in the zócalo, where they would have the chance to echar relajo just like the "real" diablos. Ivonne even persuaded a couple of her male friends to walk around with her while she was dressed as a devil. They seemed embarrassed, but not altogether unwilling, and Juan Morales' vision came to a pass. I even saw a member of the royal court of the fiestas patrias dressed as a diablo. Fidel's aunt, Doña Flora, told me she thought it was wonderful that Ivonne decided to compete. She said, "It means that we are invading many fields."

But not all reactions were positive. I dressed up as well, but when I tried to shake hands with a thirteen-year old boy I was friendly with (he had won the contest of the Diablitos the year before), he acted offended. When Emilia tried to joke around with a young boy, his mother pulled him away and chastised her for not behaving like a proper young lady. And Ivonne later told me that she had heard from one of her friends that an acquaintance of theirs had said that she (Ivonne) was making herself look ridiculous. The

responses of the older men I knew who had dressed as diablos were also mixed. I asked one of Don Fidel's relatives-by-marriage, who had participated as a judge, what he thought of Ivonne's involvement. He said he thought it was probably all right, since she was Fidel's daughter, but that it was a good thing that she wasn't going to go out with the devils when they visited the colonias. Months later, another of Don Fidel's old friends told me that he thought it was great that women were participating. It meant that the tradition was not dying out.[68]

Ivonne did not get a chance to go out with the devils when they visited the colonias after the fiestas patrias, but she often accompanies them when they go to other towns to participate in civic parades and festivals. It is too soon to tell how far-reaching women's participation in this tradition will be, but Ivonne has opened the door for any young woman inclined to participate.[69] As Emilia and probably others would testify, Ivonne was not the first woman interested in performing as a devil, but because she is her father's daughter, she was shielded to a large degree and allowed attract attention to herself in a way that the others were not.

Her emphasis on filial piety is considered laudable, and does not break with the traditional norms of appropriate feminine behavior; dressing as a diablo, she fills the place in her family that has not been filled by a male heir. In general, her performance can be read as attempt to "pass" as a man, rather than a parody as in the case of the vieja (see Lloyd 1999). But the diablo Ivonne does bend gender categories, as does her insistence that women should have the same opportunities as men (as we have seen, she is certainly not the only woman to express this view, but she is one of the few to really

[68] See Flores 1995 for a discussion of the influence that women's participation has had on the tradition of the Pastorela in South Texas.

[69] As of 2008, no other woman has participated in the contest, and girls' interest seems to have waned. Ivonne occasionally competes to please her father, but her own dream has become to compete in the national "Miss Bikini" contest.

test its implications). Unless they know her, most people assume that Ivonne is a man when they see her dressed as a diablo. But when they are told who she is, many respond, "Oh, yes, she moves like a woman." Ivonne dislocates the markers of masculinity from the male body, as Cornwall has written of male *travestis* in Brazil (1994: 112). She takes on certain "masculine" behaviors (she growls, she cracks their whip, she invites young women to dance with her), while displaying "feminine" qualities at the same time (a sway in the hips, a certain way of running, a voice not quite as deep as the rest of the diablos). And occasionally, she defies sexual norms outright, as when she takes the arm of another diablo or a male onlooker. The devils share a fraternal bond based on gender-restricted bodily experience. Ivonne has broken the male monopoly on that experience.

Yet there is one taboo she does not break; she does not perform as the Vieja of the diablos. In many ways, the Vieja is the most transgressive figure in the tradition, and for Ivonne to act as lasciviously as the Vieja does would cause people to seriously question her morals as a woman, assertions which would be more harmful than the occasional comment that Ivonne must be a marimacho.[70] (See Brandes 1988 and Flores 1995 for prohibitions on women performing as Death or devils.)

Connell asserts that "emphasized femininities" are defined by compliance with subordination, that other femininities are defined by "strategies of resistance or forms of non-compliance" and that still others are marked by "strategic combinations of compliance, resistance and co-operation" (1986: 183-184). I would argue that the feminine gender performances present in the fiestas patrias—reina, vieja and female diablo—are all part of the latter category: there is no absolute compliance, and no absolute resistance.[71]

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[70] And, at least as yet, no man has tried to compete in the queen contest.

[71] See Morris (1995) for an excellent synthesis of anthropological studies of sex and gender.

Female Diablos

GENDER, CLASS, ETHNICITY

The discourses, practices and performances of gender permeating the fiestas patrias of Teloloapan are, first, not only about gender. As I mentioned earlier, class, ethnicity and geography are also important. The diablos are almost all working class, with a few exceptions. The Reinas tend to be middle class; they have to be in order to afford the necessary accessories. The Vieja de los diablos is a parody of lower class, grotesque womanhood. Although none of the participants claims an indigenous identity, the phantasm of the Indian is nonetheless present: Pedro Ascencio and his men were Nahuatl speakers of the northern sierra; wild "Apaches" once danced with the diablos, the queen candidates often choose "indigenous" dress in the portion of the contest dedicated to "typical costumes" and mention the situation of indigenous people in Mexico as part of their discourse; the "inditas" referred to by Don Fidel even as he says that we are all indigenous, although some more than others, evidence the convoluted mixture of desire

and repulsion evoked in contemporary Mexican ethnic relations and the expression of local identities in commemoration.

DISCOURSE, PRACTICE AND GENDER PERFORMANCE

Masking in Teloloapan involves a complex play of gendered and classed "selves" and "others". The diablos are male Teloloapenses performing as male diabolical Teloloapense insurgents. Their performance is a means of transformation through exaggeration, the expression of a "not-not me", not a radical distancing between "me" and "not me". The Vieja is a male Teloloapense performing as a female outsider: a "not-me" in every sense, although the transformation is not meant to be perceived as "real". The woman who performs as a Diablo is a female Teloloapense expressing a male Teloloapense identity: the representation of a "not me, not-not me". Of the three, she is the most uncanny, because her hybridity is not overt like that of the Vieja. She does not parody, nor does she always pass; her mimesis is incomplete.

Gendered performance both structures and is structured by gender discourse. As a particular kind of practice, it is constrained by structure, and effects structure. But practice, while inseparable from structure, is not identical to it: it allows room for play. Within practice, exists the possibility of transformation, and, therefore, for changes in structure. "To describe structure is to specify what it is in the situation that constrains the play of practice" (Connell 1986: 95). The diablo, the reina, the vieja—all combine elements of structure and practice. Even the female diablo, ostensibly the least structured and most radical of the characters, is constrained by what defines ideal diabolic masculinity, and by perceptions of what defines a good daughter. Practice can be "turned against" structure, but it cannot "float free from it" (ibid. 97). Morris emphasizes that we must consider "some of the more coercive structures in operation, the structures that

mitigate against voluntarist forms of performative self-constitution even as they summon creative forms of subversion and opposition" (1995: 587).

In the context of the fiestas patrias of Teloloapan, the devil and queen contests, as particular forms of performative practice, are both products and agents of social change. They arise at historical moments as part of the consolidation of new identities organized around national space and time, and have transformed and been transformed by more recent changes in gender roles and political geography.

Chapter 3. Mexican Discursive Geography: Wildness, History, Performance

GUERRERO BRONCO

> Bronco: Adjective. 1. Crude, unpolished; 2. Figurative. Someone with a rough character and manners, and also rude, uncultured.... (*Diccionario ideológico de la lengua española*, 1ST ed.)
>
> Guerrero: rocky, arid, broken land; site of shameless waste that mocks the privation of the majority. A bay with thirty thousand toilets—white and aseptic as a tourist's buttock—in an entity of latrines and excrement in the open air. Guerrero: scarcity and greed beyond measure. National allegory. Preserve of ancient cacicazgos and paradigm of political instability, the entity exists outside the law, governed only by brute force.

With this poetically exaggerated statement, political scientist Armando Bartra opens an essay on the history of power and politics in Guerrero (2001: 43). The "white and aseptic" buttocks to which Bartra refers rest on toilets in Acapulco, the most well-known city in the state, and a national and international tourist destination. But, outside of the port, rural Guerrero is infamous for its "machos," for corruption, human rights abuses and guerrilla violence, for caciquismo and caudillismo, malnutrition, illiteracy and lack of basic amenities such as drinking water, electricity and sewage systems.

The discourse of Guerrero Bronco draws on ideas about devils and machos, and reinvents them in the context of geographic, social and economic marginalization.

Guerrero's topography allowed for the creation of settlements that thrived on the margins of central government control. It was a region where maroons settled; Indian communities could subsist relatively uninhibited by the state or even by the Church. The people of Guerrero have traditionally lived without the presence of the federal government, and, perhaps as a result, "machismo" and violence are extreme there. For

these and other reasons, Guerrero has been a crucial point for guerrilla warfare, rebellion, and revolution in the history of Mexico; it is far enough from the center to sustain armed movements for extended periods of time. At the same time, the mountains are close to some of the nation's key areas: the port of Acapulco, the internal valleys of Iguala and Chilpancingo, and Morelos (Lomnitz-Adler 1992: 71).

The history of Guerrero in many ways a history of local conflicts accompanied by tensions between particular and national interests, which lead to localized rebellions and confrontations between representatives of the State and representatives of various social sectors. During the colonial period, what is now the state of Guerrero, geographically and politically marginalized, was the fertile ground for indigenous rebellions and the establishment of coastal maroon settlements of escaped African slaves. During Mexico's war for independence from Spain, after the deaths of generals Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos, Vicente Guerrero Saldaña and local leaders like Pedro Ascencio Alquisiras kept the insurgent spirit alive in the mountains of the south, even as the rebellion was squelched in other parts of the country.

> Since before the Abrazo de Acatempan, the people from around here were in contact with the insurgents. But since there was a royalist cartel here, the insurgents were camped in the surrounding areas. Since the royalists mistreated the insurgents and peaceful people from here, some women and other young people thought of a way to be able to scare them away. They came up with the idea of dressing as spooks, with ugly masks and horns so that (the insurgents) would say they were from the devil. They used a whip, too, like the one they say the devil uses to punish. So, at night, the devils came out, yelling and cracking their whips to scare the royalists. It was said that two devils that dressed up to scare were more than enough, and if more dressed up, well, more they caused more fear. In the museum here there is a figure of one of those devils, and every year in September, they parade with masks made of colorín (told by Évila Franco Nájera, in Guzmán 1995: 58-59, my translation).

The aftermath of Independence in Guerrero, marked by tensions between the national capital and the provinces, was not much more peaceful than the war itself. Local

caudillos Juan Álvarez, Nicolas Bravo and Vicente Guerrero and their followers fought each other and the federal government over the cause of local autonomy and their own political and economic interests.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920 provided more opportunities for violent uprising in the state. The Figueroa brothers of Huitzuco, for example, led the maderista, antireelectionist movement in Guerrero, and their family has dominated state politics until very recently. Another revolutionary, Jesús H. Salgado, born in the municipio of Teloloapan, was the most important zapatista leader in the state. Always faithful to the cause of agrarian reform, he served as provisional governor of the state after the zapatistas took Chilpancingo in 1914. In 1920, disillusioned by the defeat of zapatismo, Salgado was ambushed and killed.

The Revolution did not really end in Guerrero in 1920: following popular leaders like the Escudero brothers, agrarian-based rebellions broke out in the coastal towns of Atoyac in 1924 and Tecpan in 1925, and the rest of the Costa Grande region followed suit from 1926 to 1929. More violence occurred after the promulgation of the Obligatory National Military Service Law in 1943. But the truly black period in Guerrero's twentieth century history was the "Dirty War" of the 1960's and 1970's. These decades were marked by increased state repression and police presence in the region, designed to "re-establish order" rather than rectify the social conditions that gave rise to violent conflict. Montemayor writes that, according to government statistics released in 1997, the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Puebla and Veracruz, head the list of federal entities with the highest rates of malnutrition and lowest rates of literacy (Montemayor 1999: 286). He goes on to point out the connection between extreme poverty, guerrilla warfare and police presence in Guerrero, Oaxaca and Chiapas, concluding that the rise of groups like the

EZLN in Chiapas and the EPR in Guerrero and Oaxaca are rooted in the combination of social conditions and the State's methods of dealing with popular unrest.

In 1960, fifteen citizens were murdered by state police in Chilpancingo. Seven were killed by the army in Iguala in 1962. In the same year, Raymundo Abarca Alarcón, handpicked by the President of the Republic of Mexico, "won" the governorship of the state and proceeded to persecute members of opposition (non PRI) political parties and civic organizations,[72] and otherwise alienate the economically challenged sectors of his citizenry by taking measures such as the institution of fees and obligatory uniforms and shoes for students in rural schools. In 1965, seven men were killed by the judiciales in Atoyac, and in 1967, Abarca ordered (or so it is rumored) the massacre of a group of copreros who attempted to organize in Acapulco. The combination of these events led to the uprisings of Genaro García Rojas and Lucio Cabañas Barrientos, two former teachers who, after having exhausted legal means of resistance, formed campesino-guerrilla bands (whose ideology derived from the Cuban Revolution and the example of Ché Guevara) as a means of combating the caciquismo and oligarchy that reigned in Guerrero. Both were killed during the struggles, and many of their followers were either murdered or "disappeared". Those who knew or were inspired by the insurgents keep their memories of Lucio and Genaro alive by writing corridos in their honor.

State and popular violence continued in Guerrero in the 1980's and 1990's. The social problems of the prior decades had not been resolved, giving rise in 1988 to the

[72] From the end of the Revolution until the national elections of 2000, Mexico was governed at all levels by candidates of the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), under its various incarnations. Opposition parties have existed throughout the century, but until recently, have had limited success. The PAN (National Action Party) came into being in 1939, and has been strongest in the northern part of the country. In 1988, a coalition of leftist parties came together to create the PRD (Revolutionary Democratic Party), which has been the strongest opposition party in the southern part of Mexico, including Guerrero. In 2000, for the first time since the Revolution, Mexican voters elected an opposition President, Vicente Fox of the PAN. This party, however, has yet to gain much influence in Guerrero, despite its victory in the national elections of 2006.

PRD, an opposition coalition party headed nationally by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of Lázaro Cárdenas, the revered president of the 1930's. The PRD won the leadership of three municipios in the first elections in which they participated, a number which was increased to six after charges of election fraud and a series of conflicts between the state and municipal governments.[73] The attribution of "violent character" by one social sector to another, like the identification of the devil with the other, is a double-edged sword, and often seems to be rather like the pot calling the kettle black. During the contested elections of 1988 in which the PRD emerged as a strong political alternative to the traditional ruling party (PRI), ill-fated governor Ruiz Massieu accused the PRD of being "promoters of violence and disorder," while he himself represented a government, promoter perhaps of "violence and order," which routinely used force to oppress its opponents.[74]

In 1990, state police assaulted the municipal palace of Cruz Grande, which had been taken over by PRD sympathizers. In 1995, seventeen campesinos were massacred by the mounted police and judiciales at Aguas Blancas; this event, which Bartra calls the "Rodney King case of Guerrero (1999: 60), lead to the downfall of governor Rubén Figueroa Alcocer (member of the caudillo Figueroa family of Huitzuco, which had dominated state politics since the Revolution, and which, behind the scenes, continues to exert tremendous influence). The guerrilla EPR, (Popular Revolutionary Army) was

[73] The PARM (Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution) PRT (Revolutionary Workers' Party), and PFCRN (Cardenist Front for National Reconstruction Party) each won the presidency of one municipio, as well. Other parties that have participated in state politics in the last twenty years include the PSUM (Unified Socialist Party of Mexico), PMS (Mexican Socialist Party), PMT (Mexican Workers' Party), PPR (Popular Revolutionary Party), PP (Party of the Poor) and ACNR (National Revolutionary Civic Association). Part of the problem facing social change in Guerrero, and indeed, in the entire country, is the proliferation of political parties that make unified decision-making difficult.

[74] Violence in Guerrero, however, is not limited to state violence against campesinos. Assassinations and kidnappings of wealthy citizens (in which members of the judiciales are often implicated) or political figures are not uncommon. The assassination of ex-governor Francisco Ruiz Massieu in 1994, which remains unsolved, is the most well-known local example of the latter.

created in 1997. In 1998, eleven "presumed guerrilleros" of the ERPI (Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent People) were executed at Los Charcos. The practice of torture and other human rights abuses against those believed to have connections with the EPR has been amply documented by representatives of local, national, and international human rights organizations. Human rights violations have also occurred in cases involving drug trafficking, one of Guerrero's most important economic activities[75], although the police and army seem to punish "drug traffickers" most severely in regions in which the EPR is strongest (Barrera 1999: 303).

In comparison with the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), Mexico's most well-known guerrilla group, the EPR is considered quite "bronco." Although both movements arose out of similar social contexts, their strategies are fairly different. The Chiapas-based Zapatistas have achieved international support for their platform of indigenous rights by waging an ideological war of words. Zapatista discourse is grounded in a self-conscious use of indigenous identity, which defines the movement in moral terms which the federal government has not been able to seriously challenge. The EPR, on the other hand, seems to disdain such "guerrilla lite" tactics. One spokesman was quoted as saying, "politics is not the continuation of poetry by any other means" (quoted in Bruhn 1999: 36). Although it has members in other states, the EPR is especially active in Guerrero and Oaxaca, both with substantial indigenous populations. However, the Marxist-Leninist discourse of this movement makes little reference to its members' indigenous identity, casting them, rather, as workers and peasants exploited in Mexico's class society. The EPR has garnered much less public sympathy than the EZLN, due in

[75]In Guerrero, the growing of poppies and marijuana, and the production of cocaine, are the major drug-related commercial activities. The coastal-mountain region and the northern municipios (including Teloloapan) are most well-known for drug manufacture and trafficking. The north has experienced some guerrilla activity, but the EPR has mainly concentrated its energies in the Costa and Montaña of Guerrero and Oaxaca.

large part to its open advocacy of armed struggle, and the fact that its members are much more willing than their Zapatista counterparts to engage in physical attacks on military and tourist targets.[76]

Bronco Guerrerenses seem to keep appearing on the political scene. Pedro Pablo Urióstegui Salgado, for example, is a well-known Guerrerense broncudo. From 1990-1992, he served as the first municipal president of Teloloapan for the newly formed PRD, which continues to dominate Teloloapense politics. Urióstegui then served as diputado, and after losing his party's internal election for municipal president in 1999, ran again as a member of the PRI. He lost the election, and in 2003, supported his wife Tomasa García Figueroa as the PRI candidate for municipal president. In response to her loss to Ubaldo Salgado Mojica, Urióstegui and an armed group of loyal followers took over the ayuntamiento for several days, until they were routed by federal troops. He defended his actions in the context of Guerrerense politics, claiming that "*Aquí, sólo un cabrón se entiende con otro cabrón*" (a he-goat, or ruffian, can only make himself understood to another he-goat, or ruffian). In April of the following year, Urióstegui and his followers blockaded the federal highway that links Teloloapan with the Tierra Caliente. A skirmish took place between 600 members of the police and military and 200 Uriosteguistas, in which one man was killed and forty three were detained by the authorities. Urióstegui escaped, and is currently "in hiding". Critics accused then Governor René Juárez Cisneros of protecting Urióstegui, but Juárez claimed part of his job as governor was to avoid useless confrontations, "to avoid waking up Guerrero Bronco" (*La Jornada*. October 19, 2002).

[76] See Bruhn (1999) for more in-depth analysis of the differences between the two movements.

Félix Salgado Macedonio is another broncudo with national political exposure. In the elections for state governor that took place in 1999, PRI candidate René Juárez Cisneros ("El Negro"), backed by the Figueroas, narrowly beat out his PRD Salgado, winning 1.9% more of the popular vote. The politician, referred to as "the bull without a pen," is almost a caricature of Guerrero Bronco. Originally a close associate of Pedro Pablo Urióstegui, Salgado publicly distanced himself from Urióstegui when the former broke away from the PRD. Salgado, who typically stands out among his suit-and-tie wearing colleagues by wearing a black leather jacket and riding an enormous Harley Davidson, beat out several more "presentable" options for his party's nomination (Bartra 1999: 62). Defeated at the polls when he ran for federal representative in 2000, Salgado had the election results overturned after he walked into the Chamber of Deputies and, in a "challenging and aggressive" gesture (Rivera 2000), dumped out an urn full of the ashes and charred remains of electoral ballots. For a short period, Salgado pursued a career as a singer-actor, but as of this writing, he is finishing his term as presidente municipal of Acapulco.

THE DISCOURSE OF GUERRERO BRONCO

"We should remember that, in Guerrero, there exists a confluence of guerrillas, military presence, drug trafficking, international tourism, money laundering, caciquismo, extreme social injustice and a historic predisposition to violence" (Hernández 1999).

Those who construct the discourse of Guerrero Bronco in the national media, as well as those who identify themselves as its representatives, are quick to use words like "*gallos*" and "*cabrones*" (cocks and he-goats, animals traditionally associated with the devil and with a particularly masculine ethos) in referring to Guerrerense leaders and

politicians. In a regional variation on the national culture studies of the first half of the twentieth century, they talk of a "traditional culture of violence," which includes religious intolerance, conflicts over land between neighboring communities, vigilantism, the consequences of drug production, alcohol-related violence, debts of "honor" between men, which can only be paid in blood, "*cosas de hombres*" (Bartra 2001: 51). The discourse of Guerrero Bronco conflates rugged topography, historical social conditions, state violence and personal "cultural" violence in a confusing barrage of word-images that is meant to evoke a mixture of fear, outrage, pity, disgust and respect. Non-guerrerense intellectuals like Bartra and others write of Guerrero Bronco not simply as an analysis of the social conditions in a particular place, but also as a warning: Guerrero Bronco is an exaggerated version of Mexico Bronco. Beware, fellow Mexicans, for in this "broken mirror" of the nation, we may see ourselves.

> "The town is full of echoes," Juan Rulfo writes. "It would seem that they were closed up in the hollow walls or under rocks. When you walk, you feel them stepping on your heels."
>
> And so it is. Walking through Guerrero, you feel like the ghosts are stepping on your heels. Reviewing the history of the state is passing through a cemetery of insomniac dead...In the voice of the southern campesinos, you hear the echoes of the murdered, and in their gaze you discover the ominous figure of Pedro Páramo,[77] of the owner of souls and haciendas, of the man among men, who is my father and your father because he is the father of us all, of the cacique....
>
> To exorcize Guerrero bronco is to face it. It is to recognize ourselves in the *sur profundo*, which *is el Mexico bronco y profundo*, which is the true Mexico. The rest is an illusory modernity; it is dreaming lies, as Rulfo would say (Bartra 2001b).

[77] Pedro Páramo, by Juan Rulfo (1955) is considered to be a classic of Mexican literature. It is the story of ...

In writing of the *Sur profundo*, the "deep" (and "real") South,[78] Bartra and others construct a discourse of violence and machismo, both state and individual, that silences the many other voices present in Guerrero today. Jorge Sánchez writes that Guerrero bronco "is a cultural invention that does not adequately reflect the cultural idiosyncrasy and identity of the south" (2001: 223). According to Sánchez, the myth of Guerrero bronco has much more to do with the relationship between the center and the periphery, than any innate Guerrerense temperament (236). He argues that the above-mentioned series of conflicts that arose after Independence between the federal government's desire to integrate marginal areas into the new nation, and southern leaders' desire to attain local autonomy, combined with disputes between local caudillos like Álvarez, Guerrero and Bravo, caused leaders in Mexico City to characterize the south as barbaric and uncivilized. These attitudes ultimately lead to the creation of the myth of Guerrero bronco. And even if Guerrero is a violent place, he continues, Mexico as a whole could be characterized as "bronco," not just this state.[79] Sanchez concludes his critique by lamenting that the discourse of Guerrero bronco has been internalized by its citizens, and the fact that leftist intellectuals like Bartra have taken it up as a means of exploring the state's political landscape (238).

Despite its claims to an integrated national culture, the Mexican government has historically been unable to unite a country characterized by class and ethnic divisions, and violent conflicts between regional interests and a political ideology based on the centralization of power. The predication of the adjective "bronco" on the people of

[78] El sur profundo is an echo of México profundo, or "deep Mexico," a construction created by anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla to refer to the "true," indigenous Mexican culture hidden beneath the "false" culture of the modern Mexican middle class. See Bonfil (1996).

[79] As one female colleague at the Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero (herself a victim of torture during the Dirty War), commented to me, "I'm so sick of Guerrero Bronco! Haven't these people ever been to Mexico City? There is much more violence there than here!"

Guerrero, as a qualifier which conflates state and interpersonal violence,[80] is a means of dealing with the center's inability to incorporate the periphery into a coherent program of national development. As Urban writes, "The circulation of discourse...is an objective fact. It traces the lineaments of social configuration. As in the Kula ring, it etches patterns in physical space, organizes relationships among individuals" (1996: 249). Or, to paraphrase Taussig, Guerrero bronco is not so much the cause of violence and social uprising as it is "the immanent discursive force for raking over the coals of events in search of the sense (and senselessness) of their sociability" (1987: 394). However, as has occurred with images of the devil and Guerrero bronco, the literal and figurative demonization of the periphery by the center may be inverted by a mimetic refiguration of hegemonic discourse on the part of the marginalized.

WILDNESS

According to Hayden White, "wildness" (like "madness" and "heresy") "belongs to a set of culturally self-authenticating devices" which not only confirm the existence of specific characteristics, but also

> …confirm the value of their dialectical antitheses 'civilization,' 'sanity,' and 'orthodoxy,' respectively. Thus, they do not so much refer to a specific thing, place, or condition as dictate a particular attitude governing a relationship between a lived reality and some area of problematic existence that cannot be accommodated easily to conventional conceptions of the normal or familiar (1978: 151).

The devil, the macho and Guerrero bronco as discursive formulations are intimately related to the concept of "the wild man," that unpredictable and unheimlich figure which threatens civilization, culture, and humanity itself. The wild man is a

[80] Bartra uses the concepts of "vertical" and "horizontal" to refer to state and interpersonal violence, respectively (2001: 51), but I think he oversimplifies the relations of power which can be present in "horizontal" violence, especially when committed by men against women.

generic symbolic container for the "not-us," filled with religious, sexual, political, economic and geographic content as it finds expression in the configuration of devils, machos and broncos. These wild others are generally to be found outside the boundaries of the civilized center, in the "provinces," as Mexico City dwellers refer to all other parts of the country. For the Mexica in Tenochtitlan, the wild men were Chichimecas, northern nomadic barbarians, "wild dogs" who ate raw meat and didn't wear clothes (Hernández 2002: 53). For many Spaniards, they were the unconverted Indians, minions of the devil in the New World; for colonial administrators, the wild men were those who lived in the mountains or in coastal maroon settlements, outside the control of government authority; for the modern civilized Mexican, the wild men are frontier *narcotraficantes*, Zapatistas in Chiapas, or broncudos from Guerrero.[81]

> Wildness also raises the specter of the death of the symbolic function itself. It is the spirit of the unknown and the disorderly, loose in the forest encircling the city and the sown land, disrupting the conventions upon which meaning and the shaping function of images rest. Wildness challenges the unity of the symbol, the transcendent totalization binding the image to that which it represents. Wildness pries open this unity and in its place creates slippage and a grinding articulation between signifier and signified. Wildness makes of these connections spaces of darkness and light in which objects stare our in their mottled nakedness while signifiers float by... (Taussig 1987: 219).

THE DIABLO AND GUERRERO BRONCO

It is within this tangle of signifiers that the Diablos of Teloloapan must be understood. In many ways, they represent a permutation of the medieval European devil, a "gay ambivalent figure expressing the unofficial point of view, the material bodily stratum" (Bakhtin 1968: 41).

[81] See Hernández (2002) for a similar analysis of the role of the "wildness" discourse in Nuevo León.

> Do you see that man? That's El Chivo. One night, El Chivo had gone up to the Tecampana at midnight to see if he could meet the devil and exchange his soul for riches. As the cock crowed, he heard a sound behind him. A voice said, "Don't turn around. I'm the devil, and I'll make you rich." El Chivo said, "Do you want my soul?" The voice said, "No, I want your ass." The owner of the voice proceeded to pull down El Chivo's pants and have sex with him. But when El Chivo turned around, he found out that the man he thought was the devil was actually his friend El Toro. And ever since then, El Chivo has been *medio maricón* (something of a fag) (told to me by Fidel de la Puente Basabe).

> That was a matter of revolutionary times that um, started the devils. That's how those revolutionaries were. They were soldiers of Vicente Guerrero…Saldaña. That's where they came from, his soldiers, one of his soldiers was the one that saved…all of…the tradition of the devils…so that they could, because they didn't have equipment. They didn't have equipment, and he got the idea for them to dress up as devils. So that they could defeat the…insurgents (he means royalists), because they didn't have bullets. Then, the group sounded their whips and it sounded like bullets everywhere, while those that did have rifles shot them off, and that's when the troops of invaders that came here…to take possession (told to me by maskmaker Daniel Soriel Roldán in 1998).

They are still linked to sexuality, to aggressive manhood, to material gain, and to resistance. The Teloloapense diablo is a kind of hybrid of the elegant, classical, Romantic devil and the grotesque, invasive, material, medieval devil, with his "many heads and tails, deformed and monstrous, with ferocious teeth." He combines the official with the unofficial, the self with the other. Stallybrass and White (1986) claim that there are two kinds of grotesque: the grotesque as Other, and the grotesque as hybrid of Self and Other. In the first sense, the grotesque springs from the Spaniards' view of indigenous religious images and practices as "diabolic" and the inverse, or indigenous view of accumulation-based practices and devices as "diabolic". However, while these discourses certainly form part of the context of this study, the Diablos of Teloloapan really must be understood in terms of the second sense of the hybrid grotesque. They are elegant and carnivalesque, contained and excessive, romantic and greedy, animal and human. Furthermore, these oppositions are complicated when the devils are understood in their

performative context, which includes other images and bodies: beauty queens who are, in a sense, the devils' female counterparts in the fiestas patrias; the Vieja de los diablos, who is a perfect representation of Baktin's grotesque material body, and, formerly, the characters of Death and the Apaches.

On the one hand, the diablos can be read as representatives of Guerrero bronco—unruly, unheimlich, (to outsiders) uncanny—they are fetishized others. Yet they are also valiant, elegant, romantic, heroic Teloloapenses (to insiders). They partake in the myth of the Mexican state, which proclaims itself to be democratic, international (particularly since NAFTA), ethnically and linguistically diverse, the heir of prehispanic culture, the war for independence from Spain, and a twentieth century socio-political revolution. It celebrates itself in civic festivals such as the fiestas patrias, in which political leaders at every level write themselves and their constituents into the nationalist narrative, linking past and present, center and periphery by means of communal commemorative practice. The discourse of Mexico bronco is set up as a counterpart to official nationalist narrative. It implies a vision of Mexico that highlights its potential for violent disruption, views the 1910 revolution not so much as social and political, but an expression of a combination of social unrest with national psychological character. Mexico bronco, or bárbaro, is that which stands in the way of progress, of the realization of the promise of the modern Mexican state. Guerrero bronco is sometimes viewed as a microcosm, sometimes as a displacement of Mexico bronco. Thus "Guerrero bronco" serves both as a mirror for the Mexican nation, and as a discursive means of shifting the burden of the unhomely onto a backwards region, symbolically far from the urban center (although only 3 1/2 hours by bus), with a large indigenous ("other") and rural population, geographically isolated and unfriendly.

The construction of the relationships between center and periphery in Mexico must be viewed in light of "the new world order" in which Mexico itself has been imagined as both "other" and "under" in terms of international political and economic dominance. Therefore, the formulation of Guerrero bronco/Mexico bronco is one of the elements in the construction and contestation of international political geographic relationships, with particular relevance for the relationship between Mexico and the United States.

The relationship between Teloloapan and cities like Los Angeles, Houston and Chicago are representative of changes in the ordering of spatial imaginaries following the massive immigration of Mexicans to the United States in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. These cities serve as new centers for Mexican peripheries, often displacing Mexico City as the "center par excellence" (Lominitz-Adler 1992:186). I was often asked why I would want to live in Mexico, and in Guerrero in particular, when I could earn more in the U.S. Yet the signification of the United States by Mexicans as the land of milk and honey is far from unified.

> So you're from Texas? I love old western movies. Do you ever wear cowboy boots?
>
> We're not so backward in some ways…In Texas you all still have the death penalty, right? And the violence that migrants face in Texas is horrifying.

The discourse of wildness can be appropriated by the wild, as well as applied to them. The Wildman (and Wildwoman) can use categories invented by the dominant class against that class, like the Indians who turned the label of "devils" against the less-than-Christian Spaniards or they can reclaim and resignify those categories as markers of identity as was the case for those natives who consciously chose to be devil-worshippers, since their oppressors obviously felt the devil was a powerful figure.

The concept of Guerrero bronco as the condensation of a constellation of ideas about geographic-political relationships in Mexico that can be viewed in light of the discussion Comaroff and Comaroff raise about the connection between totemism and ethnicity. The authors write that the two concepts arise in different contexts, but that "both are, ultimately, modes of social classification and consciousness, markers of identity and collective identity" (1992: 53). The difference between the two lies in the fact that totemism implies "symmetrical relations between structurally similar groupings," whereas ethnicity implies the "asymmetric incorporation of structurally dissimilar groupings into a single political economy" (ibid. 54). As a means of establishing identity and difference, the discourse of Guerrero bronco has a totemic quality, although its immersion in the unequal structural relations of the Mexican political geography brings it closer to the discourse of ethnicity. Indeed, ethnicity is not absent from the concept of Guerrero bronco, although it tends to be restricted to discussions of the montaña, the region with the largest indigenous population in the state, or the costa, a region with a mixed mestizo, indigenous and afromestizo population. With a few exceptions, northern Guerrerenses tend to be viewed, and view themselves, as "no longer" indigenous. For those outside Guerrero, this can mean that many Guerrerenses "no longer" participate in the redeeming aspects of indigenous identity (which revolve around the concept of "authenticity"), yet "do not yet" participate in the urban, "civilized" culture of the Federal District (see chapter five for more on indigenous ethnicity and its representations).

Like "ethnicity," which arises as a part of structured historical processes but becomes reified in discourse, the historical conditions which give rise to the social-geographic imaginary "Guerrero bronco" take a back seat to what is now perceived as a primary reality: Guerrerenses are violent (for example), because they are from Guerrero.

The extrinsic becomes intrinsic (ibid. 56). In true trickster style, the insurgents who followed Pedro Ascencio appropriated the ascriptive term "diablo" in order to defeat their enemy, and the auto-designation took on a life of its own.[82] "Devil," "macho," "bronco": tropes at first used to designate particular configurations of social relationships in particular historical moments, but refigured as polysemic markers of identity which continue to be contested.

PERIPHERY AND CENTER: WILDNESS AND DOMESTICATION

The history of Teloloapan can be read in terms of a series of struggles between centers and peripheries, as a dialectic of resistance and accommodation. The rebellion of the natives of Teloloapan and surrounding towns against Mexica domination in the fifteenth century, the establishment of Mexicapán after the decimation of the local population, the struggles between Teloloapan and Ixcateopan for regional hegemony and the provision of labor to the mines of Zacualpan and Taxco in the colonial period, Teloloapense ambivalence toward insurgent and revolutionary movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: all of these are moments in the construction of an identity that simultaneously celebrates local resistance to centrally-imposed structures and discourses, attempts to reposition the local (periphery) as the center by appropriating national historic discourse, and recreates the political geography of "center-periphery" on the regional level.

This identity is produced in a wide range of discursive practices which include storytelling (the legends of Mexicapán and the Tecampana), the generation of images

[82] One of Fidel's latest masks features two different styles of devils: one is a representation of a Christian devil, with horns and a slightly distorted, but more or less human, face; the other is a miniature Teloloapense diablo. When explaining the mask to outsiders, he always mentions that he included the first devil as an image of "what the Spaniards called us," and the second as an image of "our" diablos. The two devils are not identical either in form or significance.

meant to represent local identity (murals, statues, municipal emblems), and commemorative performances (the devil contest, the Abrazo de Acatempan, the celebration of Teloloapan's official designation as "city").

These local practices contest the center's hegemony in the construction of geographical-political relations in Mexico. As Bhabba puts it, they are counternarratives "that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries" (Bhabha 1990: 300). The commemorative performances of what I call alternative fiestas patrias illustrate this point.

Region of Teloloapan, Guerrero (www.encarta.msn.com)

ALTERNATIVE FIESTAS PATRIAS

Challenging the traditional simultaneous celebration of the Grito by elected political leaders, several towns around Teloloapan celebrate an alternative version of the fiestas patrias. These celebrations take place, not on September 15, and not in capitals or *cabeceras*, but on various dates, and in relatively insignificant *comisarías* in northern Guerrero. In 2000, the fiestas patrias were celebrated on September 27th in El Calvario, on October 4th in Coatepec Costales, on October 8th in Chilacachapa, and on October 18th in Apetlanca.[83] These celebrations take the form of *simulacros*, or recreations of historical events, in this case, the events leading up to the war for independence. The main characters are the same: Miguel Hidalgo, Ignacio Allende, Mariano Abasolo, Ignacio Aldama and Josefa Ortíz de Domínguez. The representations generally include the following events: meetings between Hidalgo, Allende, Abasolo and Aldama, who plan the uprising; riders sent by Doña Josefa to warn the conspirators that their plan has been discovered; the imprisonment of Doña Josefa; the Grito de Dolores (given by the actor portraying Hidalgo instead of a modern politician); battles on horseback between royalists and insurgents; the capture and execution of Hidalgo. In these commemorative performances, whose major characters figure on the national historical stage, the local represents itself in wildness: nameless Apaches and campesino "*mecos*" who fight alongside the heroes whose images stare out at school children from the pages of their history and civics textbooks, and beauty queens are transformed into revolutionaries who fight from horseback.

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[83] This is a kind of festival cycle, similar to the way that Lent is celebrated in the region, with a fair each Friday of Lent in a different town. In this case, there is a civic re-enactment each week following the official Grito. This cycle also illustrates the limits of the politically-determined municipal boundaries: El Calvario and Coatepec Costales belong to the municipio of Teloloapan, while Chilacachapa and Apetlanca belong to Cuetzala.

October 7, 2000: Last Wednesday, we went to see the Grito in Coatepec Costales, which they reenact on the 4th of October every year. The young women in charge of the library said they used to have the Grito on the 15th of September, but that it was too much *gasto* to have the two celebrations, so they do it all on October 4th. When we got there, they had already arrested Doña Josefa (a young woman who volunteered to play the part) at her house. The "*soldados de línea*" marched her from her house to the center of town, where they had built a "*castillo*" of branches in which they hold her captive. The march took a long time; every few feet they stopped and had a dialogue – the *comandante* asked her why she's not marching in step, and she replied "¡*No marcho*!" (I won't march!) Sometimes they paused for longer while she delivered a speech on liberty. After they arrived in the plaza, there was a re-enactment of Miguel Hidalgo's receiving the news that the conspiracy has been betrayed. He finally gave the Grito, and the war began. The script is long and elaborate, and they've been doing it this way for a long time. There is one comic character, who is an indigenous person who delivers the mail. He creeps around, wearing a straw hat and covering his back with a *petate*, which he occasionally gives a shake. There are also two groups of *indígenas*: the Mecos and the Apaches. The Mecos are quite funny – they wear straw or banana-leaf hats with exaggerated peaks and old clothes, and they carry sticks and use an old oilcan as a drum – in this way, they ape the formal soldados, who have a real drum and carry pistols or rifles (some even with water guns). The Apaches are wilder, naturally, and wear aluminum foil-covered head bands or crowns with feathers stuck in them, and aprons with strings or leather with bottle caps on the ends that rattle like bells as they run. Their clothes underneath are modern and they wear tennis shoes instead of huaraches. Some, like many of the "soldados de línea," wear sunglasses (Many of the soldados resemble "modern" troops or even secret police, with fatigues, sunglasses, and berets to complement their water guns).

They run in and out of stores, accepting whatever the *comerciantes* give them, although it seems they were wilder "antes," and didn't ask, but just took things (like the devils of Teloloapan). The next day, they actually re-enact the War – with the mounted leaders (Hidalgo, Josefa, Allende, Abasolo, Srta. America, Srta. Patria,) fighting the soldiers on foot, and the two indigenous groups helping the cause. It's quite chaotic, and people who get too close are in danger of getting kicked by a horse. The battle ends when all the foot soldiers have been captured (lassoed) and hoisted up on top of the basketball hoops. Hidalgo is also captured and killed. On the 6th, they bury Hidalgo.

Fiestas Patrias, Chilacachapa

October 14, 2000: We went to see the fiestas patrias in Chilacachapa, which were more elaborate than those in Coatepec Costales.[84] On the 8th, the Grito was performed, similarly to Coatepec. Josefa was taken from her house to the comisaría, where she was interrogated by the soldados de la línea, and they really did hit her, as we were told they would. I heard one elderly woman who was watching say, "Oh yes, they really hit her

[84] See also Sámano, Alejandro and Román (1994).

hard every year." Meanwhile, Hidalgo was meeting with the other generals in another house. He received word that the rebellion had been discovered, and gave the Grito. He then went to the church and prayed out loud in front of the Virgen de Guadalupe as if he was giving a mass, and then the war began. He and his men were dressed very "authentically" in what looked to be fairly costly uniforms. Then everyone marched to a central location, where the war was to take place. In this case, there were two groups of Mecos – one group, the "real" Mecos, wore large banana-leaf hats with crosses shaped on top. The other group was made up of immigrants to Mexico City who organize themselves and come every year. This second group wore large sombreros of the type sold to tourists (which have "Viva Mexico" and things like that embroidered on them) and were more uniformly dressed in cotton clothes. The Apaches were a motley crew. Many (the more "authentic," according to one source) wore high headdresses made of feathers. Others were more carnivalesque, and wore Halloween masks or other costumes that on the surface don't have much to do with the fiestas patrias. I saw several dressed as the scary figure from the movie *Scream*. A few of these carnival figures (which include a few girls, although not many) were on horseback, but the majority was on foot. There was a *castillo*, made of branches like the one in Coatepec, with a roof decorated with red and yellow flags, manned by royalist soldiers, who roamed around putting "borrachos" in jail, many against their will. After the war began, everyone retired for the night. On the 9th, the war continued. Unfortunately, we got there late and couldn't see much, but it seems that this was the day that things went badly for the insurgents, and the Apaches were hung in the field. As in Coatepec, one had to be careful not to get trampled by the horses. On the 10th, there was a parade in the afternoon, with all the local schools participating. There were also three queens, "*Las Américas*," who participate in the parade all dressed in black and carrying black umbrellas (their dyed blond hair gave an

interesting visual effect) to show that they are in mourning for Hidalgo, who is to be killed that day. I couldn't get Magritte out of my head. The other participants (apart from the soldados de la línea) carried black flags made out of tissue paper. Last came the soldados who have captured Josefa, Abasolo, Allende, Aldama, and Hidalgo. They stopped about four times to perform the "*diálogo*," which consists of reading the official death warrant, while the protagonists declaimed about liberty and dying for the patria. After the speeches, the soldiers hit them (really) on the chest with machetes. There was a lot of "¡*Viva México, viva libertad, viva Hidalgo, viva la Virgen de Guadalupe! ¡Muera el Comandante Garrido, muera mal gobierno, muera los gachupines!*" on one side, and "¡*Viva la colonia, viva el Rey, viva el Comandante Garrido, muera Hidalgo, muera México, muera Doña Josefa Ortíz de Domínguez, muera Allende!*" etc. on the other. Each time one group cried "*¡Viva!*" one thing, the other group yelled "*¡Muera!*" and vice versa. Women walked alongside the actors, offering *bebida* to the spectators. (We were told that this isn't a very old custom, but that it was introduced by a local comisario who wanted to gain popularity with the people.) There were also a few devils who are part of the celebration – a few with Halloween masks, but we saw two with wooden masks like the ones in Chapa – they went around taking down the names of people, supposedly those who will go to hell after they die, but it's all *relajo*. Meanwhile, local teachers gave *discursos* in front of the comisaría. One kept confusing the dates and talking about 1821 instead of 1810, but we were later told that he was drunk and was only speaking because the teacher in charge ran out of things to say and invited him to speak. When the procession arrived at the comisaría, the simulacro of the death of the protagonists began. They were taken inside the comisaría first, and then the rebels (except for Hidalgo) were brought out to face the firing squad. There were some short speeches, then a soldiers fired a shot (in the air, but he was drunk and I thought it came a little close) and the heroes fell

down dead. They were then carried away (by people who seemed to be of some importance in the town – women for Josefa and men for the rest). Then Hidalgo was brought out, sat in a chair and shot the same way. He was carried away and laid on a table in front of the comisaría where people pass by to see him. A little while later he got up and went inside the comisaría. The *presidentes* of the fiestas patrias thanked the participants and spectators, and it was all over.

On the second night, we met (by chance) Eduardo, who is a local anthropologist (a linguist). He had organized a small exhibition of photographs, local artesanía (embroidery and clay), and a few artifacts found nearby. He complained that he invited the presidente municipal from Cuetzala and the local comisario, but they didn't come. There seems to be a general lack of support for cultural projects. We talked for a long time, and he told us about the tradition of the fiestas patrias. He said he has read that they are celebrated on the 8th of October instead of the 15th of September because it took a few weeks for news of the uprising to get to the region. We also heard, from one of the orators on the last day, that the fiestas patrias are celebrated on the 8th because that's the day the revolution was supposed to begin, but it was pushed forward because of Doña Josefa's warning to Hidalgo. Eduardo says the Apaches represent the indigenous people who fought alongside Hidalgo, and that the Mecos are those humble people (not necessarily indigenous) who also fought with the insurgents. When I commented that this version of the fiestas patrias ends on a sad note instead of the usual celebratory atmosphere of the fiestas patrias in other places, he said that yes, we all feel sad when Hidalgo dies. And it's true – people really seemed to take the whole thing to heart. The actors seemed to really feel their parts, and the spectators also seemed very emotionally involved. Later, Eduardo told us that, unfortunately, Independence was never fully consummated in the sense that the indigenous people of Mexico still get a raw deal; I said

that perhaps it was appropriate that these celebrations ended sadly, and he agreed. He said that they used to be celebrated differently, more "authentically" – without Halloween masks and immigrants from the city, but he also said he thought that things might be returning to the way they used to be to some extent. The fiestas patrias are sponsored by two presidents who are chosen by the public, like *mayordomos* of religious festivals. They are generally people known to be able to afford the huge expense of providing food and drink for all the participants, and whoever else is around. If someone who is selected refuses the post (which never happens), he is scorned by the public. Once, Eduardo said, someone who was asked to be a mayordomo for one of the religious festivals accepted only very reluctantly, a lightning bolt struck his house, punishment from the santo. The dialogues have stayed the same for a long time – they are passed down in families. Eduardo said that there are still some people who speak "*el dialecto*," although not like before. He is teaching his son to speak it, and he already knows the names of parts of the body. Chilacachapa is still really an indigenous town, like Coatepec Costales, he says. But they don't get any support from the INI (National Indigenous Institute[85]), because they don't have towns in the northern part of the state registered as indigenous. He says they never leave their offices to find out what's really going on. They sent a letter to the presidente municipal a few years ago (a woman) asking if there were indigenous populations left in the municipio, and she wrote back saying that "*afortunadamente, ya no tenemos indígenas en Cuetzala del Progreso*" (fortunately, we no longer have indigenous people in Cuetzala del Progreso). But he would like to set up a bilingual education program to revitalize Nahuatl in the region. He's doing a project with the elementary schools, asking children about their knowledge of dialecto. He says he asked

[85] The INI is now called the CDI, or *Comisión de Desarrollo Indígena* (Commission for Indigenous Development).

one little girl, who told him that she didn't think it was right that people said they no longer spoke dialecto, because, after all, they use Nahuatl words for common household items and local place names He complained about the lack of support for the indigenous people of the region and for cultural projects in general, saying that "*somos pocos*" who really care about the culture. He told us about his experience of studying as a young boy in an *internado* for indigenas in Toluca. (His friend Emanuel also studied there – he lives in California, where he's working in a factory as a chemical engineer.) And he lamented the tendency to immigrate to the United States in order to make money. He says that if Chilacachapa could provide everything that people needed, they wouldn't have to go to the U.S. We're going to Apetlanca for their fiestas patrias, which start on the 18th of this month. Eduardo says they're worth seeing, but that they're very different from the celebrations in Chilacachapa. He says the people of Apetlanca are "*puros blancos*, *con ojos azules*," that they're all ganaderos, and that their celebration shows "*valores españoles,*" unlike Chilacachapa and Coatepec Costales. As an example, he says that in Chilacachapa, they don't charge admission for the *toros*. But in Apetlanca, not only do they charge admission, but not even comisarios or other important people can get in without paying.

RESISTANCE AND WILDNESS

The Mecos and the Apaches are two versions of the resistive "wild." While the "soldados de línea" seem to be very much on the side of order (in dress, manner of marching, music, and policing function), both the Apaches and the Mecos seem to be about disorder and chaos. The image of the Apache, on both sides of the border, is the image of wildness. On both sides of the border, the Apaches were known from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century as the indomitable Indians, whose raids

constantly threatened state authority and the ability of law enforcement to maintain order and peace. Deportation was one method used by the governments of New Spain and then Mexico to control the Apaches. The idea behind this practice was the removal of troublemaking "savages" from their homes to places from which they would not be able to return. The destination of these exiles included Mexico City, Havana and Veracruz (Archer 1973:376), although Teloloapense chronicler Francisco Nájera told me that some were also sent to Guerrero. Nájera feels that these deportations were the origins of "Apaches" as participants in the fiestas patrias in the region. However, the only historical evidence for northern Indians in Guerrero I found referred to a small group of "*kickapoos y mexcaleros*" who were sent to the coastal Hacienda of San Marcos in 1881 (Miranda 2006: 262). And the presence of Apaches in dances in other regions of Mexico calls into question direct historical links between the Apache characters and the dances in which they participate. Whether the Apaches were ever physically present in Guerrero may be beside the point since, as discursive tools in the context of the fiestas patrias, the Apaches signify wildness and indigenous identity in general terms. [86]

This flexibility is evident in the combination of "Indian" elements (feathered headdress, certain stereotypical movements) and more "modern" elements (sunglasses, tennis shoes, Halloween masks). The Apaches represent the resistive power of the other in its most foreign guise: they are certainly other to the Spanish soldiers, but they are also other to the Guerrerense insurgents. Neither do they represent the "pristine" prehispanic indigenous populations whose culture has been co-opted by the state as part of

[86] In his article about the "bronco Apaches of Mexico," Flagler reports that some Chiricahua Apaches who lived near the US-Mexican border refused to be assimilated into reservation life because "the supervision of government agents and the control exercized by the army conflicted with their spirit of freedom" (2005:120). These "broncos" raided on both sides of the border, even after the "official Apache resistence" was subdued in 1886. According to Flagler, Mexican and American soldiers pursued these "broncos" up until the 1930's, when they were finally wiped out (ibid.127).

mexicanidad. In fact, in this imaginary, the Apaches do not possess culture (see Feinberg 2003:21). The alterity that derives from their outsider status and lack of culture frees them from all but the most tenuous bonds between signifier and signified. Their wildness is allowed free reign, spilling over into ludic performance and, occasionally, real danger.

The Mecos,[87] on the other hand, represent the power of the local, of "us" (Guerrerense campesinos) in opposition to "them" (Spanish soldiers). Their "typical" campesino dress (huaraches, cotton clothes and sombreros) marks them as more heimlich than the Apaches, more comprehensible, and better able to represent the community. Unlike the Apaches and the heroic historical figures, the Mecos do not act as individuals; rather, they form small companies of insurgents, a bit unorganized in comparison with the soldados de línea. Not completely wild, their strength lies in their trickiness and their determination to defend what belongs to them.

AMBIVALENT PERIPHERIES

There is, as well, an internal differentiation among the Mecos, at least in Chilacachapa. The local Mecos are rather different, a bit wilder, than the group organized by those living in Mexico City. The second group is often referred to as the "Mecos Chilangos" ("Chilango" refers to someone from the Federal District). Their dress and comportment reflect the relative economic success of the migrants, and causes ambivalent reactions on the part of those still living in Chilacachapa. While it is often said that the Mecos Chilangos *realzan* the fiestas patrias (make them more presentable), they are also considered by many to be less "authentic" than the local Mecos.

[87] The word "Meco" has an uncertain etymology. It may be derived from "Chichimeca" which was the name given to the "wild" tribes of northern Mexico by the more "civilized" Mexica who inhabited the region of present-day México City. Currently, the word "meco" is used to refer to someone who is unkempt or unclean.

The ambivalence expressed about the "progress" attained by integration in national and international economic networks also comes into play in the characterization of the fiestas patrias of Apetlanca.

October 18, 2000: The night before last, we went to see the fiestas patrias in Apetlanca, which Eduardo had characterized as a "white" town. There was an organized program, with bailables from Iguala, Chapa, and Apetlanca. The municipal president from Cuetzala was present (unlike the celebration in Chilacachapa). A local performer sang "México Lindo y Querido" as she waved the Mexican flag. The comisario of Apetlanca gave the Grito, with the municipal president by his side, and accompanied by the Queen, Princess and two Ladies of the Fiestas Patrias, along with assorted pages and escorts. It seemed that much more money had been spent on this event, particularly for costumes for the bailables. More video cameras were also in evidence. The following day, there was a *charreada* and a *baile*, but no simulacro of the war.

Clearly, the citizens of Apetlanca are less concerned with expressing resistance to hegemonic geopolitical relationships. Local identity is articulated with the presence of horses and horse-related activities, but, aside from the delay in celebration, the Grito, validated by the presence of the municipal president, is played out in accordance with national tradition.

MALE AND FEMALE INSURGENT BODIES

The gender relations expressed in these fiestas patrias deserve some commentary. With the exception of Apetlanca, the commemorations provide a significant space for the presence of female actors, particularly demonstrated by the centrality of the character of Josefa Ortíz de Dominguez, the "Corregidora." The story of Doña Josefa is rather fascinating. She was originally from what would later become the state of Michoacán, but

married Miguel Dominguez, a lawyer from Querétaro. She was forty-two years old at the time of the conspiracy, "a rotund woman, a matron with lively eyes and an abundant chest" (Taibo 2007: 29). Although her salon became one of the centers of the planning of the conspiracy, she was in fact quite conservative about many things, not allowing her daughters (she had 14 children all together) to dance or go to the theater. After the conspiracy was discovered, her husband began to collaborate with the royalists in order to hide his wife's participation, going so far as to have his eldest son enlist in the royalist forces. Apparently, he locked Josefa up in her room to keep her from aiding the insurgents. However, she managed to send at least one message to a co-conspirator who was able to warn Hidalgo that his plans had been discovered, thus moving him to start the revolution sooner than originally planned. She was detained and sent to a convent shortly thereafter, the first of several arrests she would suffer during the war. Josefa survived, however, to be named one of the ladies-in-waiting of Iturbide's wife, the Empress Ana. She declined the honor, as she did any financial reward for her part in the independence movement. It is unclear when she died; some mention the year 1829. Her remains are in the church of Santa Catalina (ibid. 30-33).

The commemoration includes a fairy-tale like episode of Doña Josefa being locked away in a tower only to be rescued by Hidalgo and his men, which is more historical fantasy than reality. But the character is not a typical weak and passive female, nor is she an emblematic beauty queen, in the style of Teloloapan or Apetlanca. The process of selection is similar, in that it is considered an honor to be chosen, and the young woman is often a member of a relatively well-connected family. But she suffers in her role of brave insurgent, mistreated by her captors, imprisoned and then forced to march at sword point to her execution. The women chosen to represent Patria and

América in Coatepec and the three Américas in Chilacachapa must also be fairly hardy, as they fight on horseback in the simulacro alongside the men.

The Mecos and Apaches, however, are all male. The wildness of the Apaches and the Mecos, like the Diablos of Teloloapan (at least before 2001), rests in part on the freedom their masculinity provides them. Women participate as strong figures, but characters whose strength rests on moral uprightness and courage, not in ludic wildness.[88]

Las Américas

SPACE, DISCOURSE AND POLITICS

Spatial networks in Mexico are complex, and involve local, regional and national relationships based on historically, economically and politically significant associations. El Calvario, Coatepec Costales, Chilacachapa and Apetlanca belong to a regional

[88] In 2008, I became aware of another regional tradition in which the war for Independence is recreated. In various towns of the Costa Chica of Guerrero, indigenous and afromestizo participants stage battles between "Apaches" and "Gachupines" in which the female protagaonist is called "La América." Her scenes are played with "La Reyna" (the Queen of Spain), her royalist counterpart (see Gutiérrez Ávila 2008: 231-239). The origins of these northern and coastal traditions have yet to be studied.

network with historical roots, economic relationships, and some aspects of common identity. However, each town is positioned differently: El Calvario and Coatepec belong to the municipality of Teloloapan, although those from Coatepec often feel isolated or neglected because of their relative distance from the cabecera. Chilacachapa forms part of the municipio of Cuetzala del Progreso, but is also located at a distance from its cabecera, whereas Apetlanca has long enjoyed a close political relationship with Cuetzala. Coatepec and Chilacachapa maintain some sense of indigenous identity, although the majority of the population no longer speaks Nahuatl. El Calvario is considered a mestizo town, and, as I mentioned, Apetlanca is known for its "Spanish" population.

By means of the simulacro of the war for Independence with is the focus of their fiestas patrias, El Calvario, Coatepec Costales and Chilacachapa construct a critical discourse on their places in the national political geography. In pictorial style, they play with and appropriate the discourse of Guerrero Bronco, incorporating the "really" wild Apaches and domesticated wild Mecos into a celebration of counter hegemonic resistance. In a sense, the War for Independence provides a convenient backdrop for the representation of the relationship between the local and the national. What is being simulated is not only a specific historical event which plays a major part in canonical Mexican historiography, but the ambivalence of the marginalized about the central: participants honor Hidalgo, Adame, Allende and the rest, but they also focus on local participation embodied by the Mecos, comic figures, but without whose presence, the war would not have been won in the end. The reenactment of the Grito follows prescribed political ritual, but in these commemorations, local politicians tend to be conspicuously absent. As Comaroff and Comaroff write, this is a subversive historiography, one that writes "against the hegemony of high bourgeoisies, the power of parliaments, and the might of monarchs" (1992: 27).

Interestingly, in the typical celebrations of the Grito, the beginning of the War for Independence is seen in hopeful terms as a clean break from the colonial past. In these small towns in northern Guerrero, however, the celebration ends with tragedy: the death of Hidalgo and his compatriots, a victory for the royalists. The war itself would last for ten years, with the insurgents barely surviving in the backwoods of southern Mexico. The celebration of the nation in this context is marked by the specter of loss and death. We are confronted again with the unheimlich, lack, absence and desire: structures of feeling which are related to the discursive construction of Guerrero as a wild, bronco space which has not been able to achieve modernity and the reciprocal critique by Guerrerenses of the state which has not been able to fulfill their social, economic and political needs.[89]

The 27th of September of 1821, as I mentioned, is the date upon which the consummation of Mexico's independence was achieved, when Agustín de Iturbide rode into the Mexico City at the head of his victorious army. Indeed, the cycle of commemorations I discuss in this chapter begins on September 27th in El Calvario. But there is another local commemoration that takes as its subject matter the end of the War for Independence, albeit in a form informed, again, by local historical sensibility. I open the next chapter with a discussion of this event: the Abrazo de Acatempan, a commemorative celebration which, like those discussed above, highlights local, regional and national spatial-political relations. The Abrazo also provides an interesting context for the discussion of the role of history and the past in the construction of local identities, and, in this age of deconstructing invented traditions, offers a provocative look at the importance of "what really happened." In the next chapter, I go on to write about another commemorative event, the festival of Cuauhtémoc in Ixcateopan, whose existence is also

[89] I owe a debt of gratitude to Antonio Machuca for encouraging me to think about "the construction of identities out of the elements of loss." See also Johnson 2008.

based on a polemic that casts historiography both as science and ideology. The festival of Cuauhtémoc also takes up various issues already raised in the context of other commemorations: the relation between the local and the national, the construction of the nation from the periphery, "authenticity" and historical narrative, the uses and problems of ethnicity as a marker for counter hegemonic identities, and the centrality of the (male) body in commemorative performance.

Chapter 4. Space, Power and History: the Performative Production of the Local

> Perhaps because it is a country in the process of development, perhaps because inequalities and differences continue to thrive in spite of the equalizing efforts of modernization, perhaps because a national history is only skin while the entrails are particularistic, perhaps because of the survival of love for the *terruño*, México is especially prone to small-scale historiography. The natural path of Mexican historical science is localist. Other paths have been imposed, many times by force, foreign imitation, fashion, y university pedantry (González y González 1997: 58).

At the end of the last chapter, I alluded to a constellation of civic commemorations in the northern part of Guerrero, in which history is taken very seriously. These are not the national histories, or *historias patrias* taught in school, but local histories, *historias matrias*, or, perhaps, an amalgam of the two: national history refracted through local knowledge and concerns.

These commemorations take as their sources, almost always, past struggles against a foreign invader, most often the War for Independence from Spain, although it is understood that the foreign invader has taken on many shapes throughout history, and is most recently represented by the United States. The re-enactments help to produce a local, regional, state, and sometimes national poetic of resistance, refashioning time-history and space-territory into local identity, framed by the geography of power that creates a discursive network of centers and peripheries.

In this chapter, I focus on another local commemoration: the Abrazo of Acatempan, which takes as its subject matter the end, rather than the beginning, of the War for Independence. I analyze this event in terms of its chronotopic function: its ability to meld constructions of time and space through the power of embodied commemorative

performance. Commemoration, in this context, provides a space for a critical refashioning of the past and the present, based on ideas surrounding "what really happened": a changeable discourse which depends on the positionality of the speaker.

CENTERS AND PERIPHERIES IN THE MEXICAN SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

There are two major questions to be asked about civic ritual: what does it do, and how does it do it? The first question can be raised on a number of different levels, since what is at stake for the participants in these events varies. For those most intimately involved in the production of civic ritual, what the ritual does for them may be bound up in the construction of self, in family relationships and personal motivation. Certainly, this is this case for Don Filiberto in Acatempan (see below). But in a wider sense, what civic ritual does is construct centers and peripheries: temporal-geographic configurations that allow for the discursive (and sometimes material) manipulation of the relations of power in Mexico.

Claudio Lomnitz-Adler points to the mutual construction of "Occident" and "Orient" and Europe and its colonies as examples of the way in which "centers and peripheries have historically constituted each other" (2001: 165). He argues that these mutually constitutive relationships must also be examined on a smaller geographic scale— in local, regional and national spaces.

Mexico City has always cast an enormous shadow over "the province," as the rest of the country is known. During the period of Aztec hegemony, rulers exercised economic control from Tenochtitlan over groups outside the metropolis through a complex tributary system. After the conquest, the Spaniards took advantage of the structures already in place, and made Tenochtitlan into the capital of the province of New

Spain, even as Mexico itself was thrust into a web of international relations that relegated it to marginal status (Florescano 1994: 66). Internally, Mexico City remained the political, economic and cultural center of the country even after Independence, although much of the nineteenth century was characterized by struggles between the federal and state governments. In the twentieth century, Mexico City became a sprawling metropolis, with a population of nearly twenty million people, almost a fifth of the nation's population. The survival of the center, however, could only be assured by its dependence on the periphery.

The complex relations of interdependence between the center and the periphery are negotiated on the discursive, not only the economic and political level. This is particularly evident in the imaginary of modern Mexican nation-state, constructed around the figure of the Indian and/or the peasant. It has therefore been necessary for the center to co-opt the periphery to sustain its own hegemony. One of the strategies for incorporating the local into the national project has been the legitimation of local and regional histories by including them in primary and secondary school textbooks (see Vázquez 1979) and by the physical presence of representatives of the national government in local commemorations, particularly those which celebrate events or personages who are considered to have contributed to the grand events of national history.

The State needs the grounding "reality" of the local, as much as local celebrations are legitimized by State presence. Much of the State's authority rests on the idea that it is governed by the people, through their representatives, and that the national territory with which it is identified is the sum of the smaller territorial units within its borders. Therefore, local traditions identified with towns, municipios or regions can come to stand for the nation as a whole. The local anchors the national, and the national elevates the

local. But neither is reducible to the other. The State may discursively encompass the local, but it can never be isomorphic with it. In fact, as we saw in the last chapter, the State requires that the local remain "other" in order to justify its power.

At the same time, the local can be felt or construed as a means of resisting national, or even international, hegemony. If, as Dear argues, the late-capitalist world is characterized by spatial chaos (1997: 60), then the need for the local, with all its reassurances of authenticity and stability, becomes even more pressing. The signification (and resignification) of time and space, their solidification into history and place through commemoration, is a means of reestablishing a community-centered imaginary, which privileges concepts of nature, authenticity, order, and originality (Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 7).

The hegemonic Grito described in chapter three is a prime example of a strategy designed to inspire massive participation in the rituals of the patria. Through the simultaneous action of the President of the Republic, the state governors and municipal presidents, the nation shimmers into being, albeit momentarily. Ritual serves the political need to tie the periphery to the center (Kertzer 1988: 23). As Beezley et. al. write, "Those in power have grasped the crucial importance of public ritual in symbolizing and constantly recreating their hegemony" (1994: xiii). But most civic rituals are more contested and fragmentary than the Grito. Center and periphery are not stable locations expressed or reflected in ritual. Rather, in ritual, nation and local mutually construct each other in discursive webs of shifting hierarchies.

Guerrero, the man and the state, inhabits a kind of wild space, a bronco space. It is the space of the "authentic", the resistant, and as Armando Bartra writes, a mirror for what Mexico could be (2001a). Some take it as a warning, others as a historical fable that offers an alternative to the morally bankrupt present. As even "scientific" historians are

fond of pointing out, the past suggests lessons for the present and the future. Van Young writes that spatial distance from Mexico City is often glossed as temporal distance from the present (1994: 360, see also Fabian 1993). For Acatempan and other pueblos in northern Guerrero, the past is a resource that can be used as a means of ameliorating the marginalization caused by distance from the center. As nodal point in patrimonial geography, Acatempan is in a position to solicit government aid in building roads, increasing services, and constructing monuments. Centers and peripheries, then, are products of perception, as well as structured social inequality.

THE ABRAZO OF ACATEMPAN

> Vicente Guerrero was able get past the enormous lack of confidence that Agustín de Iturbide inspired in him, but his troops remained cautious. So, when both armies came together in Acatempan, Guerrero's soldiers watched those of Iturbide suspiciously. During the last ten years, they had confronted each other as enemies on the battlefield, and it seemed strange that they were now celebrating a friendly meeting. The contrast between the troops was surprising: well-dressed and fed soldiers on the one hand, and guerilleros from the mountains, underfed and wearing rags, on the other (*The Consummation of Independence*, nationally produced educational monograph bought in Teloloapan in 2000).

January 10, 2000. People start to arrive early in Acatempan. A few still walk from Teloloapan down the old highway, now a partially-paved street called 10 de Enero, but most drive or come in the *combi* using the newer highway to Apaxtla. There is little room to park, though, so we end up walking a long way. In the *placita*, there are several rows of chairs set up under an awning in front of a podium and a large banner which reads "Abrazo de Acatempan" and "179th Anniversary". Below the *placita*, on the other side of the highway, there are stands set up for the spectators. Vendors sell jícama with salt and chile, popsicles, ice cream, and other snacks, ignoring the policemen who tell

them to clear the road before the horses come and trample them. We are too late to get really good seats, so I set up the video camera at the corner of the *placita* and prepare to remain standing for the presentation.

Before the actual event occurs, there are various protocols to follow. First, a series of speakers comment on the historical importance of the Abrazo:

> Various theories have been proposed by investigators and historical experts, but now is not the time to argue, nor to judge this or that historian's point of view. Simply, the event occurred. The historical event was realized, and today, it is being commemorated. We do it enthusiastically because a feeling of patriotism vibrates in each and every person present here today. The feeling, and the desire to live in peace. With work, we will transcend our ancestral backwardness.
>
> Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends from all over this region, families come from the municipio of Teloloapan, from the municipio of Ixcapuzalco, from Acapetlahuaya, families come from Ixcateopan, the cradle of our *mexicanidad*, everyone in this region who has come to this location, converted into altar of the *patria*. We are excited, awaiting the moment in which we begin this ceremony commemorating the 179th Abrazo de Acatempan. Again, welcome, enjoy the event, enjoy the beautiful climate of the southern region, let us enjoy the country landscape of this mountainous part of our beautiful state of Guerrero. Let us soak up the sentiments of its people. Everyone from Acatempan, children, um, adolescents, youth, mature men and women, enthusiastically woke up today at five o'clock in the morning, watering and sweeping the streets in order to present our visitors with the best of our community. Let us enthusiastically accept it, because this is a patriotic town. It is a town that recognizes its past. And in the past, we must construct the present. The past is the guide and orientation for our future.
>
> Our illustrious Tixtlecan, General Vicente Guerrero, authentic consummator of national independence, one day like today, along with his insurgent army, met the royalist army commanded by Agustín de Iturbide, sealing with a fraternal embrace the beginning of the peace for which Mexican hearts had so long yearned.[90]

[90] Just before the presidential elections of 2000, the cover of one national political magazine displayed a reproduction of an oil painting representing the Abrazo and the question "And after the elections? Reconciliation?" The editors of the magazine mistakenly date the event in February of 1824, after Iturbide had been executed (Signo de los Tiempos 16:93, July/August 2000).

The state orchestra, which has come from Chilpancingo, is introduced. They play classical music by a Mexican composer, and then the second speaker, also a local teacher, steps up to the microphone.

> These historical events are like a bell, reminding us to construct a future that is congruent with our glorious past. Guerrerenses, especially the children of this land, have the right to be proud. Because destiny provided us with this place in which the most significant of our ancestors set the stage for the consummation of our nation's independence. The passage of time has not diminished the greatness of General Vicente Guerrero's deeds. The decisive and ethical way in which he went to battle against his enemies granted him a prestige even in the eyes of the defenders of the monarchy.
>
> We Mexicans have been moving down the paths of history for more than a century and a half, working hard to construct the nation that our heroes dreamed of. And experience shows us that, only by means of the patriotic fervor expressed by the consummator of independence as his father begged him to abandon the cause of liberty, "the *patria* comes first,"[91] may we affect our times in a positive manner, joining forces in order to make our *patria chica* and our country, a place in which goodness, and mutual respect between all Mexicans, prevail.

He then likens the meeting of Guerrero and Iturbide, and the two sets of ideas that they represented, to the agreement recently made between Governor René Juárez and the striking health care workers. The Abrazo, he says, "is a symbol of unity" even for dissimilar groups.

> The next speaker is the president of the festival committee. He proclaims that
>
> This festivity is not just about Acatempan. It is for the municipio, the state government, the federal government. But the fact is that, in this moment, we only see a few authorities. So I cordially suggest that this invitation be extended to the federal government of Dr. Ernesto Zedillo.[92] We would like to share these joys, these feelings, born when two generals with very different ideas came together

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[91] According to Mexico's version of the George Washington "I cannot tell a lie; I chopped down the cherry tree" story, after Guerrero received this first letter, his father went down his knees and begged his son to give up his hopeless fight and join the royalist army, as Iturbide had suggested. Guerrero's reply can be found inscribed on monuments and government buildings all over the state: "I have always respected my father, but my country comes first" ("La patria es primero").

[92] President of Mexico from 1994 until 2000

here in Acatempan. Liberty, justice, justice for which the people clamor. Which we, today, see trampled. We must invite the authorities to see that, day by day, we move away from discrimination. That there be equality. That is what General Vicente Guerrero fought for. That is why this general's troops bled, in order to leave of this Mexico of today. Esteemed authorities, let us, next year, invite the Mexican Congress to be here in its entirety. Let it be that, not just Acatempan, not just the committee, not just the comisario, stands guard over this festivity, but the Governor of the state. So that this festival, day by day, becomes more and more important. Authorities, members of the presidium, the town of Acatempan is grateful for your visit. The town of Acatempan thanks you repeatedly for this moment, in which, despite all of your other occupations, you have come to be with us. Even though I would like it to be a little more...not just one day, but two, three. You will see that this is what Acatempan needs. Acatempan is not just one day, the Abrazo de Acatempan, it isn't just a state day. It is national. So we should, promote it, then, everyone here, so that with each day, this becomes more widely known. We thank you.

The orchestra gets ready to play the national anthem. Members of the organizing committee pass out leaflets with the words to the national anthem. This would not normally be necessary, but apparently there is a verse which refers to Vicente Guerrero which will be sung today, although it is usually omitted. The local and visiting dignitaries (comisario of Acatempan, municipal presidents of Teloloapan and surrounding municipios, representatives of the state government) lay wreaths at the foot of the bust of Guerrero, and have their pictures taken.

A parade follows, featuring brass bands (called "*bandas de guerra*") and students from each local and municipal school, and an announcer begins to talk about the importance of the Abrazo at the local, regional and national level.

He states,

Mexicans' fervor makes us live with great emotion the instant in which Vicente Guerrero Saldaña met Agustín de Iturbide in order to embrace, sealing a pact to initiate peace, the peace which we enjoy today, the social well-being to which we have access and which we truly deserve. Municipal authorities, the authorities of this beautiful community, entrenched in this emotion and expectation, are witnessing the arrival of this beautiful scene of young students from an educational institution from Teloloapan, Guerrero. It is the *banda de guerra* from

> Teloloapan which opens our parade, with these beautiful ladies, who arrive with the first letter of the name of Teloloapan displayed on their chests.

He breaks to ask all the authorities who should be seated at the table of honor to please take their places. A primary school from Acatempan passes by the grandstand. The announcer asks the public to stand as the flag passes by, saying,

> Our symbol, our sacred tricolor cloth, with her, with the *bandera*, all Mexicans identify ourselves, all men who live in this nation, we see our faces and the faces of our loved ones, the faces of our heroes, the blood spilled, in this sacred tricolor cloth, the passage of our bold children and youth, marching like good Mexican soldiers, like soldiers of the *patria*.

A float passes by, with two young boys riding on it. One is dressed as Iturbide, the other as Guerrero. The announcer begins to speak about the history of the Abrazo de Acatempan., mentioning that the war for Independence began on the 16th of September of 1810, and that today, we were celebrating the consummation of that independence in which Agustín de Iturbide and Vicente Guerrero met in the town of Acatempan and end the conflict.

> Today, we are gathered here in order to witness, and to maintain that independence, that peace, the liberty of citizenship, that liberty, for the young people, for the children...that liberty that we must turn over to the youth tomorrow. Each and every one of you is welcome. The town of Acatempan receives you with open arms. Thank you.

The state band plays again, this time, the state anthem. Once again, the public makes use of the leaflets passed out earlier. The *simulacro* is about to begin. The announcer presents the first group of messengers who have come from Iturbide, from the direction of Teloloapan, with a letter for Guerrero, "who brandishes the flaming sword, the rifle, keeping the torch of liberty alive..."

The announcer asks everyone to move out of the street, and out of the way of the soon-to-arrive horses. Three men on horseback ride up, holding their letters up high.

"Three men on horseback, showing off beautiful stallions, well-controlled horses, noble, shiny, of, um, truly impressive proportions."

He asks the *paleta* vendor to please stay out of street. Then the three messengers return. Shortly thereafter, four riders come from the direction of Acatempan.

> Now we see a dark horse, a *pinto* in the middle, other dark horse, and a [?] *golondrino*, four gentleman, mounted on their shiny stallions, carrying General Vicente Guerrero's answer. They, who defend the insurgents' cause, will go to General Iturbide, in order to reply on behalf of our southern hero.
>
> The next set of riders passes by.
>
> The insurgents' mail returns. That is how our insurgents dressed. The charro outfit had already been popularized. There were *chinacos* more than anything. The chinaco outfit is the ancestro of the charro outfit. The chinaco wore a hat in the Spanish, Andalucian style. We must recognize that, too. He wore pants with buttons bordering the legs. It was a kind of pant which allowed the wearer to unbutton them when he had to cross a river or a swamp.

Another spectator walks into the middle of the street. The crowd responds with whistles and catcalls, but the young men saunter casually across anyway.

"Now comes a second message, a second message sent by General Agustín de Iturbide. An Alazán, accompanied by an Appaloosa. And here we have, well, I can't see if he's riding a donkey or a bicycle, but, who is it?" A woman calls out, "A donkey!" The announcer continues,

> Too bad we can't see it from here. I was saying, an Appaloosa, an Appaloosa and three Alazáns. The Appaloosa is the horse, um, who has white splotches and dots on his hindquarters. It's a race that has been especially exploited by breeders from the United States. They say that it originated with the Cheyenne and the Sioux Indians, who developed the breed. And now, it has become as popular as the quarter horse that the charros typically use. Like this one coming now: Lucerillo, with a white mark on his hindquarters. And this white Alazán. A man from the country, always looking proud on his mount. Why not say it….

He continues to describe the horses in great detail, until Vicente Guerrero's messengers return, "in a full-out gallop, a full-out gallop. They have now negotiated, and

only they know what agreements have been made. We'll see soon, how this *simulacro* will play out…."

Finally, Vicente Guerrero himself rides down the road.

"And now, friends, Vicente Guerrero is coming, consummator of our national independence, on an Alazán with a mark on his hindquarters…" And the announcer is interrupted by Iturbide beginning his dialogue.

> Iturbide: Esteemed Vicente Guerrero. I have sent you various letters, which you have not answered. I beg you now, here in the hills, to join me.
>
> Guerrero: I will never join you. I love my mountains, and I will never accept these Spanish laws. I will never accept, señor Iturbide, I will show you…
>
> *(Guerrero is having trouble with his horse; he looks like he's had too much to drink.)*
>
> Iturbide: Look, we are Mexicans, sons of the *madre patria*.[93] We should shake hands, not destroy or kill. They call us tyrants, but are we not Mexicans? I promise you a pardon.
>
> Guerrero: That is an insult to me! And I will never accept. I, señor Iturbide, will show you…
>
> Iturbide: And why?
>
> *(The audience laughs, because Guerrero seems to have forgotten part of his lines.)*
>
> Guerrero: Because I am Vicente Guerrero…
>
> *(Guerrero nearly falls off his horse, and the audience screams with laughter.)*

The rest of the dialogue is difficult to hear, so I am taking the liberty of reproducing the written dialogue as it was meant to be recited, although of course,

[93] Literally, the "mother fatherland."

because of inspiration, lack of preparation, or often, inebriation, the performance of the Abrazo varies, or omits, aspects of the dialogue.

"DIÁLOGO PATRIÓTICO...QUE SE DESARROLLA EL 10 DE ENERO DE CADA AÑO CON MOTIVO DEL ABRAZO DE ACATEMPAN"

Iturbide:	Le mandé distintas cartas, las que no me ha contestado, y le ruego sin recelo, que se una a mi lado.	I sent you various letters, which you haven't answered, and I beg you without reservation to join me.
Guerrero:	A tu lado no estaré, mientras viva en mis montañas; jamás obedeceré, esas leyes de la España. Solo el cobarde se engaña y acepta la promesa, Yo jamás aceptaré; mi patria es lo que me interesa, y por ella pelearé mientras Dios me de licencia.	I will never join you as long as I live in my mountains, I will never obey these laws of Spain. Only a coward lets himself be fooled and accepts the promise. I will never accept; My *patria* is all that interests me, and I will fight as long as God allows it.
Iturbide:	Mire, somos mexicanos, hijos de la Madre Patria, debemos darnos la mano para no destruir la mata, Y nos tengan por tiranos. ¿Qué no somos mexicanos nacidos en este suelo? Usted no tenga recelo, yo le propongo el indulto.	Look, we are Mexicans, sons of the *Madre Patria*, we should shake hands, so as not to cause more destruction And be considered tyrants. Are we not Mexicans, born in this land? Do not have doubts, I propose a treaty.
Guerrero:	Eso para mí es un insulto y jamás aceptaré, y hoy, Señor Iturbide, se lo voy a demostrar.	For me, that is an insult, and I will never accept, and today, Señor Iturbide, I will prove it to you.
Iturbide:	¿Y por qué?	And why?

Guerrero:	Porque soy Vicente Guerrero. La letra V dice “Viva Guerrero” y no dice que se indulte, que sería defeccionar en el tiempo venidero, Y nadie me haría formal.	Because I am Vicente Guerrero. The “V” is for *Viva Guerrero* and isn’t for someone who accepts truces, Which would be the same as defecting in the coming times. And no one will make me formal.
Iturbide:	Pero es mucho lo que ha sufrido, y al fin no ha de triunfar.	But you have suffered much, and won’t win in the end.
Guerrero:	Mi cadáver haz de enterrar si lo traspasa tu acero, pero no has de traicionar, qué sería de Guerrero. Yo jamás he de dejar sin recorrer este suelo, que ha venido a usurpar ese canalla extranjero. Y si usted es verdadero y se inclina por el Rey que domina desde España, tal vez la vista le engaña y no quiere otra ley que marque independencia, y por eso otorga prudencia y me quiere convencer. Pero eso no lo ha de ver. En la frontera del sur, ya murieron mis hermanos. Quiere borrar mis creencias. Será la grande indecencia que pudiera cometer, y antes de convencerme al que tiene usted a su lado, le voy a hacer entender con este acero templado	You will have to bury my corpse if your steel pierces it, But you will not betray, What would belong to Guerrero. I would never depart without visiting all of this land which that damn foreigner has come to usurp. And if you are true, and stand by the King who rules from Spain, perhaps your eyes deceive you and you don’t want another law that would call for independence, and for that reason you grant prudence and want to convince me. But you will not see it In the southern borderlands, my brothers have already died. You want to erase my beliefs, which would be the biggest indecency that you could commit. And before you convince me, standing by your side, I will make you understand with this tempered steel.

Iturbide:	Mire usted, General Guerrero lo que voy a decir. Si usted me quiere matar yo no deseo morir. Lo invito a parlamentar	Look, General Guerrero, I will tell you something. If you want to kill me, I don't want to die. I invite you to a dialogue.
Guerrero:	¿De qué manera?	In what way?
Iturbide:	Qué nos unamos los dos y juntemos nuestras manos. Nos veamos como hermanos encomendados a Dios. Escucharía nuestra voz, y con su auxilio poderoso haremos frente al tirano que más de trescientos años se apoderó de la patria. Nuestros ojos han palpado infinitos desenfaños. Lo lamenta el mexicano que ha nacido en este suelo. Soy su amigo verdadero, y le ruego acepte mi mano.	Let us unite together and join hands. Let us see each other as brothers commended to God. He would listen to our voice And with his powerful aid, let us confront the tyrant who took over the country more than three hundred years ago. Our eyes have seen an infinite number of horrors, lamented by the Mexican born in this land. I am your true friend, and I beg you to accept my hand.
Guerrero:	Yo aceptaré vuestra mano sólo con la condición, y lo estimaré sincero si es en bien de la nación. El honor de nuestro acero y con la palabra hermanos al decir que nos unamos y el rigor impongamos en sacar el extranjero que invadió a nuestro suelo en donde siempre habitamos.	I will accept your hand, on one condition, and I will sincerely esteem you if it is for the good of the nation. By the honor of our steel, and brothers bound by our word, upon saying that we will unite and let us forcefully commit ourselves to expelling the foreigner who invaded the land in which we have always lived.
Iturbide:	Todo eso arreglaremos. Ya le he dicho que soy sincero y su amigo verdadero si acepte vuestra mano.	We will work it all out. I have told you that I am sincere and your true friend, if I accept your hand.
Guerrero:	Venga su mano primero.	Give me your hand first.

Iturbide.	Con gusto, Señor Guerrero. Y en prueba que así lo quiero recibe un estrecho abrazo.	With pleasure, Señor Guerrero. And to prove that I love you receive a warm embrace.
Guerrero:	Lo acepto desde luego, como hombre verdadero. Que se atienda nuestro triunfo, y se salga el extranjero, Recabemos este suelo que ya se había usurpado, y que se evite la sangre que tanto se ha derramado. Que venga la paz bendita acabemos de arreglar, y que el Dios de los destinos nos ayude a prosperar.	I accept, of course, as a true man. Let the foreigner observe our triumph and leave. Let us win back this land that had already been usurped, and avoid the blood that has been shed so much. Let blessed peace come. let us come to terms, And let the God of destiny help us to prosper.
Iturbide:	Acorde con nuestra idea es mi modo de pensar. Que cese ya la contienda y se deje de matar. La gente se está acabando, y no habrá con quién poblar este suelo que peleamos.	My thinking is along the same lines. Let the fighting cease, and the killing stop. The people are dwindling and there will be no one to populate this land we are fighting over.
Guerrero:	Señor General Iturbide, antes de terminar, a voz quiero recordar que en premio de nuestro honor ya podemos proclamar, el pabellón tricolor en todita la nación: la que hemos de respetar y defender con valor.	Señor General Iturbide, Before we finish, I want to remind you that as a reward for our honor, we can now proclaim the tricolor flag in all the nation: which we must respect and defend with valor.

Iturbide:	Y con gusto levantaremos, esa bandera iniciada. Que juremos en Iguala por todos los mexicanos, Y por ser tan interesante como símbolo nacional que nuestro ejército lleve el emblema trigarante.	And with pleasure let us raise that initiated flag. Let us swear in Iguala on behalf of all Mexicans. And because it is so interesting as a national symbol, let our army carry the *trigarante* emblem.
Guerrero:	¡Oh! Qué nombre tan brillante que simboliza el honor con denodado valor y la esperanza gigante, venida del mismo Dios.	Oh! What a brilliant name that symbolizes the honor, the notable valor and the enormous hope that comes from God himself.
Insurgentes:	¡VIVA EL GENERAL AGUSTIN DE ITURBIDE!	LONG LIVE GENERAL AGUSTÍN DE ITURBIDE!
Iturbide:	Compañeros, ya somos hermanos.	Companions, we are already brothers. Long live General Vicente Guerrero!
	¡Viva el General Vicente Guerrero!	Long live General Vicente Guerrero!
Todos:	¡VIVA! ¡VIVA!	VIVA! VIVA

When the simulacro is over, the crowd gradually begins to disperse. Most spectators retire to Acatempan to share *tamales nejos* (flat tamales wrapped in avocado leaves and cooked in hot ashes) and *mole verde* (a sauce made of chile and squash seeds, among other ingredients), the traditional fare which characterizes important events. Non-Acatempenses with Acatempense friends or family members are invited to eat private houses, while other outsiders eat in restaurants or the outdoor *fondas* which do a booming business on this day. Talk centers around the *simulacro*: Why didn't more authorities come? Guerrero was drunk again and forgot his lines. They should really spend more

money on costumes, because you couldn't tell the insurgents from the realists. The *simulacro* is not what it used to be.

The Abrazo of Acatempan

"WHAT REALLY HAPPENED" AND "THE LAW OF TRADITION"

One of my first contacts in Teloloapan was Francisco Nájera, official chronicler of Teloloapan. He has privately published a number of books on local history, including a pamphlet about the diablos, a biography of revolutionary Jesús H. Salgado, a critical history of Mexican-U.S. relations, and a municipal monograph. Unlike some chroniclers and historians, Nájera is convinced that the Abrazo did, in fact, take place in Acatempan in 1821, basing his argument on evidence given by historian Lorenzo de Zavala, a contemporary of the independence movement.[94] He disputes, however, the date of

[94] Nájera is ambivalent toward Zavala, saying that despite being a rigorous historian, he is of "triste memoria" because he took the side of the Texans against the Mexicans during the Texas independence

January 10, arguing that since the first letter between the two generals was written on that day, it would have been impossible for them to meet until some time later. He proposes the 18th of February as an alternative date, and has included this proposal in a mural commemorating the event in the regional museum, which he runs. He is critical of what he considers to be an ahistorical attitude on the part of the Acatempenses, citing their refusal to include the figure of Agustín de Iturbide in the monument that marks the site of the meeting, and their insistence on commemorating the Abrazo on the 10th despite evidence to the contrary. Nájera told me he has tried to "educate" the Acatempenses, but they won't listen, because they've always done things that way.

The date is not the only controversial historical "fact;" historians have championed various alternative locations for the Abrazo. According to *Así Somos*, a series of informational broadsheets about history and culture published by the state government and often centered around one particular municipio, an oral tradition in Cocula (about an hour away from Teloloapan, off the main highway to Iguala) also makes reference to the meeting between the two generals. The compilers write,

> Cocula had much to do with the Independence of Mexico. From Cocula, Agustín de Iturbide contacts Vicente Guerrero who was staying at a nearby place called El Cacahuatal, about 17 kilometers from the *cabecera*. From there the message was sent to El Cacahuatal, inviting Guerrero to establish agreements about Mexican independence. Vicente Guerrero goes to the meeting place and installs his center of operations in the Catholic church. There, they write the Plan of Iguala. By tradition, the Coculeños refer to an old table, belonging to a local family, as the piece of furniture upon which the historical document was drafted (Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero 1993).

The same publication, in the edition dedicated to the municipio of Teloloapan, reports the more accepted tradition from Acatempan.

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movement. For Nájera, the Texan settlers were the true "broncos." He consistently refers to them as "ruffians" (see Nájera Castrejón 1999).

> The personal interview between the caudillos Guerrero and Iturbide took place in Acatempan, Gro., on January 10, 1821.
>
> On the morning of January 10, Iturbide went out accompanied by 200 soldiers to the settlement of El Tanque, from which Acatempan is clearly visible. Guerrero and his forces occupied the middle of the field, while to the right, hidden among the rocks, were the troops of Pedro Ascencio Alquisiras. On the left flank, were the troops of don Antonio Vicario Figueroa y de Cáceres. Iturbide came to the front of his troops. Guerrero was watching him, and when he felt the time was right, he also came forward. When they met, the two figures embraced, and then all went on to the town of Acatempan. In the local chapel, before the altar, as was the custom then, they swore friendship and to consummate Mexico's independence.
>
> Every year since then, the municipal authorities of Acatempan and Teloloapan organize a great celebration, and perform a simulacro of the meeting between Guerrero and Iturbide, as well as a literary and musical program that takes place on the esplanade, the site where the legendary ABRAZO took place (Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero 1992).

Another well-known version of the history establishes Atempa, a now-vanished suburb of Tepecoacuilco (two hours from Teloloapan, on the other side of Iguala),[95] as the site of the *Abrazo*. This version of the history was widely circulated by Igualteco historian Leopoldo Carranco Cardoso in a book published by the national union of educators which won a prize given by the federal Secretary of Public Education on the

[95] In January of 2000, I visited Tepecoacuilco (locally known as "Tepecoa"), and talked to the local cronista, who talked at length about what he felt to be the important aspects of his pueblo's history. He said that he knew that the Abrazo had been celebrated in Tepecoa, Carranco proved it. But the historians, "you know how they are," got the name wrong: Acatempan instead of Atempa. However, there were other historical moments which he felt were more important: Morelos was held prisoner there; you can still see the house. Morelos' girlfriend, Francisco Ortíz, also lived in Tepecoa. But the most important local personality was Valerio Trujano, another of Guerrero's followers. The municipio is officially called Tepecoacuilco de Trujano. He was born in 1767, and has a large monument in the center of town. His father had bought the name of Trujano from another citizen, José María Trujano, in exchange for six goats. His mother was a mestizo known as "the white Indian," named Ana María. The proof is in the parish archive. Some people say he was from Puebla, but Carranco proved otherwise. His daughter has a painting of the Virgin done by Trujano, as well as a sword that belonged to him. Trujano was killed in Tlaxcala after a battle that lasted 111 days and made him famous, and his remains are in Puebla. Carranco himself is buried in Tepecoacuilco, in the atrium of the church, next to Gómez Ortiz, who owned the house where Morelos was imprisoned. The priest had wanted the tomb moved elsewhere, but the townspeople resisted.

occasion of the celebration of Flag Day in Iguala in 1959.[96] The work was written in an attempt to elevate the figure of Guerrero above that of Iturbide, who at the time, was enjoying a historiographic resurgence (see the debate over the historical importance of Cortés and Cuauhtémoc in the chapter that follows). *Historia de la Bandera Nacional* is Carranco's attempt to define for once and for all Guerrero's role as true consummator of Mexican Independence, an attitude shared by most Acatempenses, as well.[97]

Carranco places the blame for the confusion surrounding the *Abrazo* at the door of historians who publish conflicting opinions. He declares that "the oral tradition transmitted from parents to children assumes an importance which must be considered, to a certain point, definitive," and bases his history on these oral narratives which are "important sources of unassailable truths" (1959: 33-34). He also cites various nineteenth-century historians as more "scientific" sources. Lorenzo de Zavala (cited by Francisco Nájera), who was a friend of Guerrero, claims the encounter took place in Acatempan. Historians Carlos María de Bustamante, Vicente de Rocafuerte and José María Lafragua agree that an interview took place. Their contemporary Lucas Alemán, supporter of Iturbide, wrote at the time that the encounter never took place, that Iturbide was never able to inspire enough confidence in Guerrero. Carranco argues that Alemán simply wanted to eliminate Guerrero as a major player in the drama of Independence, and that the encounter did indeed take place, although not in Acatempan.

According to his version of the story, after not receiving a reply to his letter of January 10th, Iturbide decided to go to Tepecoacuilco to visit the brothers of José

[96] The writers of *Así Somos* present Carranco's version of events in the edition they devote to the figure of Vicente Guerrero (Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero 1994).

[97] Carranco attacks all who dare insult the name of Guerrero, those who would pretend that he was either uncultured and uncouth, or those who would claim that he took advantage of his position to accumulate wealth. He points as an example of the latter to the "mansion" that claims to be the birthplace of Guerrero in Tixtla, saying that the original humble house was destroyed as a means to blacken the hero's name (1959: 22).

Figueroa,[98] who was Guerrero's secretary, in order to set a date for a meeting with the insurgent general. He arrived in Tepecoacuilco on February 4th. One of the brothers, Jesús María, gave Iturbide a letter from Guerrero which he had just received: an answer to Iturbide's earlier letter. Carranco argues that it was Guerrero who convinced Iturbide to abandon the royalist causes, comparing Guerrero to the last Aztec emperor, Cuauhtémoc, in terms of their shared patriotism and love for justice. On February 18th, Iturbide sent a letter to the colonial viceroy, claiming that Guerrero had agreed to join his forces to those of Iturbide in exchange for a royal pardon. The purpose of this letter was to lull the colonial authorities into a false sense of security so that the two generals could meet without arousing suspicion. The meeting was set for February 5th, a date which Carranco claims as evidence that the tradition of Acatempan is patently false, since they celebrate the 10th of January. After an exchange of letters, the two generals finally met outside Tepecoacuilco in a place then known as the hill of Atempa. They then retired to the house of José Figueroa, where they started to elaborate the terms of their agreement. They were served watermelon for dessert, which inspired Guerrero to use its colors in the new flag. Both generals created red, white and green flags, although Iturbide's design, displayed in Iguala for the first time on February 24th, 1821 would be the only one recognized.[99] It is possible, writes Carranco, that there was a later meeting in Acatempan,

[98] The Figueroa family from Huitzuco and Tepecoacuilco is perhaps the most powerful in the region, boasting two state governors, and continues to wield considerable political influence in Guerrero.

[99] The author claims that there was a disagreement between Guerrero and Iturbide as to how to order the three colors. Iturbide wanted to put white, symbolizing religion, first, then red, for the union between insurgents and royalists, then green for independence. Guerrero argued that the green stripe should go first because the watermelon produced by Mexican soil manifested its colors in that order. Guerrero had his first wife, María de las Nieves Pichardo, sew a flag based on his vision of allegiance to the watermelon, which he then displayed for the first time on March 2 of that year (79). This apocryphal tale is not generally accepted in Mexican historiography, and Iturbide is credited with the creation of Mexico's first flag as an independent nation, an event which is commemorated every year in Iguala ("Cradle of the Mexican Flag") on February 24th.

but that the original encounter took place in Tepecoacuilco (85).[100] Iguala is now known as "The Cradle of the Mexican Flag," and "The Cradle of Independence," although a proposal to transfer this last title to Acatempan was presented to the state Congress in 2007. One Igualteca exclaimed indignantly, "We respect history here, especially that which has to do with our municipio" and "you can't erase history from one day to the next." The proposal was rejected (Polanco 2007).

When I visited Tepecoacuilco in January of 2000, I had a long conversation with Pedro Castillo, who had just finished his tenure as municipal *cronista*. Although he was much more interested in talking about the life of Valerio Trujano, a local hero of the War for Independence, than the Abrazo, he did affirm that the meeting between the two generals did take place in Tepecoacuilco, justifying his claim by alluding to Carranco's book. But historians, "you know how they are," got the name wrong—Acatempan instead of the Cerro of Atempa. It turned out that Carranco was buried in the atrium of the church on the plaza; his grave was marked by a large monument proclaiming him a local personality. According to Castillo, the priest wanted to move the tomb to the cemetery, but "the townspeople resisted," so it stayed where it was.

Jesús Guzmán has recently argued convincingly that the Abrazo did in fact take place in the municipio of Teloloapan on the 14th of March of 1821, although he maintains that the two generals first met in the cabecera of Teloloapan, and then went on to Acatempan, where the 800 troops of Guerrero were quartered. Guzmán bases his argument on the combined testimony of royalist spy Tomás de Cajigal and Anastasio Zerecer, follower of Guerrero (2002: 91).

[100] Carranco then makes a series of connections between Guerrero and Cuauhtémoc, which will be more fully explored in the next chapter.

Despite these controversies and the possibility of alternative sites (which, apart from Cocula and Tepecoacuilco, include the town of Atempa in the municipio of Chilapa, and another Atempa in the municipio of Tixlta) Acatempan has been "officially" accepted as the site of the historic meeting. The legitimation of this particular local discourse is evidenced by the fact that the textbook approved for state primary schools by the Secretary of Public Education (SEP) states that the Abrazo took place in Acatempan, establishing the date as January 10 (1993: 125).[101]

BODIES, SPACE AND MIMESIS

The discourse of commemoration is not only temporal-historical, but also spatial. And space emerges from both an imaginary network of power relations and an imaginary field of significance and felt experience. Commemorations are discourse and practice, narrative and experience. If, at a discursive level the Abrazo of Acatempan creates and comments upon the social, political and economic relations that form the Mexican geographic imaginary, at a phenomenological level, it provides its participants with the opportunity to "feel" Acatempenese, or Teloloapense, or Guerrerense. When the actors from Teloloapan meet the actors from Acatempan in the middle of the road in front of the placita, place, "a pause in movement [which] makes it possible for a locality to become a center of felt value" (Tuan 1977: 137) comes into being. That spot of dirt, now paved

[101] Other primary-level educational materials offer this same information. The ubiquitous "láminas" which are printed sheets presenting history and other school subjects through pictures show the Abrazo, always with Guerrero dressed in a typical Guerrerense charro suit, and Iturbide in the uniform of the Spanish army. Dates for the Abrazo vary. One establishes the date of "two weeks after the drafting of the Plan de Iguala on February 24, 1821" Another mentions no date at all. These nationally produced materials, with only marginally less fervor than those works commissioned and produced by the state of Guerrero, tend to portray Iturbide as a traitor and Guerrero as the true hero of Independence. See for example the articles printed in the commemorative magazine published on the occasion of the centennial of the establishment of Guerrero as a state (Cienfuegos 1949, Gómez 1949).

over and marked by historical monuments, becomes the locus for memory and feeling, a "sense of place,"[102] a sense of the distance (physical and symbolic) from Teloloapan to Acatempan, an historical appreciation for "this is where it really happened", and the feeling that we, the participants, occupying common ground, have something in common with those famed historical figures represented in the simulacro.

And here we return to the question: how does commemoration do what it does? Commemoration is, perhaps, the example *par excellence* of the chronotope, in which "time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (Bakhtin 1981: 84). It is "the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied," the figure which "makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh, causes blood to flow in their veins" (ibid. 250). Commemoration materializes time in space, but adds another element to the mix which is not present in literature: the body. Commemorations can be defined as corporeal chronotopes which "stand as monuments to the community itself, as symbols of it, as forces operating to shape its members' images of themselves" (Bakhtin, quoted in Basso 1996:62). History-making may involve turning lived experience into narrative (Dening 1993: 74), but commemoration turns historical narrative back into lived experience.

> A ritual is not a journal or a memoir. Its master narrative is more than a story told and reflection on; it is a cult enacted. An image of the past, even in the form of a master narrative, is conveyed and sustained by ritual performances. And this means that what is remembered in commemorative ceremonies is something in addition to a collectively organized variant of personal or cognitive memory. For if ceremonies are to work for their participants, if they are to be persuasive to them, then those participants must not be simply cognitively competent to execute

[102] "Sense," as Rodaway remarks, has a dual meaning: "sense as in 'making sense', refers to order and understanding. This is sense as meaning. Sense, or 'the senses', can also refer to the specific sense modes—touch, smell, taste, sight, hearing and the sense of balance. This is sense as sensation or feeling" (1994: 5). Both "senses" of the word are important here.

> the performance; they must be habituated to those performances. This habituation is to be found…in the bodily substrate of the performance (Connerton 1989: 72).

It would be going too far to say that the participants in the Abrazo are "possessed" by the characters they portray, but, despite the radically different contexts of their historical production, I am tempted to draw a parallel between the embodied simulacro and the Hauka spirit possession cult of West Africa analyzed by Paul Stoller (1995). Both the Hauka spirits and the historical-mythical figures of Iturbide and Guerrero are linked to hegemonic discourses of power, but are resignified in corporeal practice as a means of mimicking State-derived historical discourse, a way to "tap into [its] extraordinary power so that it might be recruited for local uses" (ibid. 197).

Taussig defines the mimetic faculty as "the nature that culture uses to create second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other" (1993: xiii). He writes, "The wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power" (ibid.). Commemoration is a representation, an imitation of the past, as is historical narrative in general (see White 1987). For this reason, the controversy over the "real" date of the enactment is not mere pedantry, but an appeal to the symbolic importance of calendrically observed repetition (Connerton 1989: 65). But no commemoration is a faithful copy of the "original."

The very word "simulacro" points to the mimetic nature of commemoration in Acatempan. The figures portrayed are Other, in the sense that they are men long dead. One of these, however, is particularly Other. Although in the historical moment portrayed, Iturbide seeks to align himself with the insurgents, we know how the story ends. He is revealed to be a traitor with Spanish blood, a secret monarchist whose ambitions ultimately turn him aside from the noble intentions of Guerrero and his men.

Guerrero, on the other hand, is really "one of us." The prototype of a Guerrerense (the state bearing his name did not come into being until twenty years after his death), a humble Tixtlecan who fought for the common man against the foreign enemy which had dominated the *patria* for 300 years, then spearheaded the movement to remove Iturbide as Emperor.

Historically, Guerrero's relationship with the post-Iturbide government was tense. After being named a member of an interim triumvirate, Guerrero served in this post for one year, then retired to Tixtla after conflicts between conservative republican and liberal federalists, also manifested in conflicts between Scottish Rite and York masons (Guerrero was a liberal and a *yorkino*).[103] His retirement was short-lived, and Guerrero returned to public life to be named President of the Republic in 1829, although he was forced out of office one year later after his Vice president, Anastasio Bustamante, rebelled against him. In 1830, Bustamante had Guerrero arrested and shot. Three years later, the Mexican government headed by General Antonio López de Santa Anna named Guerrero "Benemérito de la Patria" (an honor which would also be shared by Iturbide some years later). By converting Guerrero into a deity in the national civic pantheon, a status which the insurgent leader holds to this day, the State co-opted his memory, making him one of the foci around which the new nation would form its identity and (re)write its history.

Few of the participants in the commemoration of the Abrazo of Acatempan remember the post-Independence history of their hero, or the convoluted conflicts between conservatives and liberals, centralists and federalists, Scottish Rite and York masons. For the majority, Guerrero was a prototypical Guerrerense, a local hero who defended the common man, and, along with fellow Guerrerenses Hermenegildo Galeana,

[103] Orozco writes that the Yorkinos were "the party of the people, of the …impoverished middle class, of the miserable rabble" (quoted in Di Tella 1996: 1).

Juan Álvarez and Nicolás Bravo (Guerrero's archnemesis), procured the nation's Independence. Commemoration always involves what Hayden White refers to as "emplotment," defined as "making stories out of *mere* chronicles" (1978: 83, emphasis in the original). This may occur in one of several modes or tropes: romantic, tragic, comic or ironic[104]. The narrativization of the Abrazo of Acatempan basically unfolds in the romantic mode, although there is an underlying sense of tragedy, given the participants' foreknowledge of Iturbide's betrayal. The story is a moral one (see White 1987:14); like many episodes in Mexican historiography, it frames an episode of a morally upright national hero (Pedro Ascencio, Vicente Guerrero, Cuauhtémoc) who fights on behalf of his community or patria, but is ultimately betrayed by an immoral, corrupt foreign enemy more interested in individual gain than in the common welfare (Iturbide, Cortés). The myth of Guerrero, like all historical myths, highlights certain elements, while silencing others.[105]

> To give moral form to nationalist consciousness, the identification of the State with national history is sought in a synthesis of historic conquests and virtues. Class morality, wholly accepted and assumed by those who suffer it, works through a single idea: all education rests on the normalization of grandeur. For a time, this grandeur is concentrated in the teaching of History, in the heroics which articulate the moral rectitude and legitimacy of each and every one of the State's own fables....The triumphant Revolution pedagogically administers its past. A *guerrillero*, a subversive, can always be the source for impulsive inspiration just as long as, on becoming a figure in the civic pantheon, he supports the System that honors him with statutes with his own meaningful silence (Monsivais 1997: 13).

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[104] "No given set of casually recorded historical events can in itself constitute a story: the most it might offer to the historian are story elements. The events are made into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like—in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or play" (White 1978: 84).

[105] See also Flores (2002) for an excellent discussion of historical myths and "master symbols" in the context of the Alamo.

This is history in its pedagogical mode. But commemoration takes place in the performative mode, which

> …intervenes in the sovereignty of the nation's *self-generation* by casting a shadow between the people as 'image' and its signification as a differentiating sign of Self, distinct from the Other or the Outside. In place of the polarity of a prefigurative self-generating nation itself and extrinsic Other nations, the performative introduces a temporality of the 'in-between' through the 'gap' or 'emptiness' of the signifier that punctuates linguistic difference" (Bhabha 1990b: 299)

When Acatempense riders take on the role of Guerrero, they appeal to his pedagogical power as a State icon—an Other—but, at the same time, *recognize* him as one of their own, seeing himself "refracted in the images produced by alters" (Stoller 1995: 42). We come face to face, again, with the Not-Me—Not Not Me of devil masking (see chapter two). They consume the image of Guerrero that emerges from nationalist historiography, but in the process of consumption, produce their own self-image: that of the rebellious southerner who fights any and all impositions from the center, come what may, returning to him a voice that had been, as Monsivais points out, stripped from him by the State. Located in the productive gap between signifier and signified, the Abrazo of Acatempan resists an easy incorporation into national historiography, at the same time that it defiantly inserts Acatempan into national historic mythology. For residents of Acatempan, the Abrazo provides an opportunity to enter into the national consciousness. The event also allows the townspeople to produce a counternarrative, commenting critically not only on their location in the national political geography, but also on their ambivalent position in relation to Teloloapan (as the cabecera grows, Acatempan is increasingly perceived as a *colonia* rather than an autonomous pueblo).[106]

[106] When Acatempenses speak of going to Teloloapan, for example, they say they are going to the "centro," and in 2000, bus fare between the two towns was only one peso more than bus fare within Teloloapan

As we have seen, Teloloapenses also use the event to comment on relations with Acatempan. Acatempenses are stubborn, tied to tradition, and yet do not always take their tradition, which is also Teloloapan's tradition, seriously enough. But the reverse is also true. The fact that Guerrero is said to have been coming from Acatempan rather than Teloloapan, and that an Acatempense always plays the part of the local hero, is fundamental. That Iturbide, the traitor-to-be, rides from Teloloapan and is portrayed by a "rico" from the cabecera, is also significant. Acatempenses, then, are not ricos, just as Guerrero wasn't a rico.[107]

Teloloapenses, ostensibly identified with Iturbide, also participate as Guerrerenses in the mimetic identification with Vicente Guerrero, even as Acatempenses, through the discourse of "ricos" and "pobres" may link them with an extralocal space and ideology. In response, many Teloloapenses construct a discourse which identifies Acatempenses with disorderly bodies and unruly historiography.

VOCES DE LA CIUDAD

During the two years that I lived in Teloloapan, TVT, the local television station, aired a program on Saturday mornings called "Voices of the City." A few days before the *simulacro* of 2000, Manuel, José and Jacobo, the announcers of this program spoke about the Abrazo, mentioning the polemic surrounding the event. Manuel concluded that, "even if the historians agree or don't agree about the date, the fact is, it happened. I agree that it didn't happen on the day they celebrate, but well, customs become laws, and in some way, laws exist to be followed." In the discussion that followed, the moderators

[107] In popular discourse, wealth is linked to corruption (witness the stories linking the accumulation of wealth to pacts with the devil), whereas poverty may be seen as more "authentic" (hence Carranco's insistence on establishing the historical Vicente Guerrero as having a humble background).

expressed their personal feelings about attending the Abrazo: “In the moment, how does it feel? The emotion that everyone feels when the royalist forces and the insurgent forces clash,” says Manuel. José replies, “Yes, but you all remember how it used to be. Going to the celebration in Acatempan meant getting covered in dust, because we used to have to go by way of the old road, down January 10 avenue, which is now the road that goes by the back of the FOVISSSTE (a neighborhood on the outskirts of town organized by the government for teachers), going to El Tanque (technically, a small settlement outside the city, which has become like a *colonia* of Teloloapan). That’s the way we would take to get there, arriving covered in dust.” Jacobo responds, “It was a special day because the whole family would go. But there was respect, there was organization. Maybe less people went, but the crowds that go these days don’t let you really appreciate the act like you should, no?” José doesn’t agree with the way the dialogue is written. “It’s okay, it’s like they were giving the style of a traditional dance, but it would be better if they did it in prose rather than verse.” Jacobo agrees. “They mechanize it that way. It’s monotonous.” “I think,” says José, “that the day they do what we’re saying, translating it into a dialogue that could really have happened, it will be much more attractive.”

In Teloloapan, many people center their memories of the way the Abrazo used to be around making the trip from Teloloapan to Acatempan. My sister-in-law, who lives on January 10 avenue, remembers walking several hours and taking a picnic. Évila Franco Nájera, in a life history edited and published by local historian Jesús Guzmán, remembers being present for the 100 year anniversary of the Abrazo in 1921. It was organized jointly by the municipal authorities and the Society for Supreme Ideals, a local civic and cultural organization that no longer exists. The municipal president at the time was Camerino T. Ocampo, who sent invitations to the governors of Guerrero, México, Morelos, and Puebla, but none of them attended the event, or even sent a representative. Everyone left

Teloloapan around 7:00 a.m., and arrived in Acatempan at 8:30. The insurgents arranged themselves on the top of the hill that's on the right, before getting to the town, while the royalists were on the left. The generals came forward, spoke for a long time, gave the *Abrazo*, and then everyone applauded. Everyone went to the main plaza, where another dialogue occurred next to the small monument in the center of town. They then went to the church where the papers had been signed 100 years before, then to share tamales and mole. The table where the papers had been signed stayed in the church in Acatempan for some time, but a local politician had it brought to Teloloapan. Some people say it was given to a museum in Michoacán, others say it became the private property of a local landowner. The table, says the Maestra Évila, was made in an old style, tall and thick, out of a hardwood called *tepehuaje*. She adds that she never saw the chair (Guzmán 1995).[108]

The week after the Abrazo, the commentators of *Voces de la Ciudad* took up the subject again. José read from copies of Guerrero's and Iturbide's letters. People called in with the following comments: "an important custom for our people," "impressive," "well-organized," and "it should be accorded more importance." Manuel, José and Jacobo say, "The place has been upgraded, with cement, trees and stairs." However, "the costumes need a lot of work so that they'll look more real."

In a later interview with José, we talked more about the *Abrazo*. He says that it was more exciting when he was a child. Before, Iturbide's army all dressed alike, in royalist uniforms. Before, the two generals kept their distance until they actually embraced. Things have really degenerated. And Guerrero was drunk! It really takes away the solemnity of the event. "We used to keep silent. Everyone got really excited when they gave the *Abrazo*." It's all about creativity, ingenuity and interest, on the part of the

[108] Évila Franco tells her version of the diablo tradition in the same paragraph that she talks about the Abrazo, linking the two traditions together in the same historical context.

municipio and the community. The festival of the flag in Iguala is facing the same problems. Part of it stems from a lack of interest on the national level. For example, the 32nd and 33rd stanzas of the National Anthem refer to Iguala. Six years ago, the state government decreed that students in Guerrero's schools would have to sing those verses so that they would understand and respect the part their state played in Independence. But the decree was only in effect for one year.

We have to pay attention to the *Abrazo*, he says, because "it gives us our identity, because we belong to the region." It's an obligation. Like the diablos, he says (Fidel is listening, too). They dress up, but they don't think about "the essence" of the tradition. Everyone who dresses as a devil should have to know about their history, their "significance." After the *Abrazo*, José did some interviews with members of the public, and it turned out that no one knew their history. They didn't know how many years the anniversary had been celebrated, they didn't know Guerrero's maternal last name, or where he was born. Some people thought he had been born in Acatempan. It's ironic, says José, that these people want national recognition, but they don't know their history. There was a project to design a different monument seven years ago, when he was the director of civic activities. José claims that the inhabitants of Acatempan didn't want to include Iturbide, "just our general." Everyone agrees however, he says, that the real problem is that it all ends in a drunken mess (*una franca borrachera*).

The carnivalesque potential of the commemoration is, of course, another means of escaping the orderly narrative of heroic figures, betrayers and betrayed, that may seem to underscore the commemoration. These unruly drunken bodies defy attempts to make the event transcend "the local" and acquire the national importance many feel the Abrazo deserve. The official text is present, but undermined by the actors' performance of it. As de Certeau writes, consumption is itself a form of production; readers play "games and

tricks" with the text, manifested in the body, "subconscious gestures, grumblings, tics, stretchings, rustlings, unexpected noises, in short a wild orchestration of the body" (1984: 175).

THE CHARRO

There is an interesting bodily absence in educated Teloloapense discourse about the Abrazo: no one mentions the horses. Acatempan is known for horse-related crafts, especially the creation of leather goods like saddles and bridles. By reading the transcription of the announcer's running commentary from the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that almost as much language is spent on describing horses as it is on historical events. Yet few Teloloapenses, with the exception of the members of the Organization of Charros, grant them their due as a marker of local identity.

The horse, of course, cannot be separated from his rider. And in the context of the Abrazo, the insurgents can be read as charros, tracing the symbolic distances between pueblos (and between past and present) from horseback. Like the bronco and the diablo, the charro is a quintessentially male figure, which is intimately bound up in the construction of Mexican national identity; along with the China Poblana, the Charro has long been viewed as the folkloric expression of *mexicanidad*.

Nájera-Ramírez reports that riding was an elite, male privilege during the early part of the colonial period in Mexico (1994:2). The word peon, in fact, referred to one who traveled on foot. But in the seventeenth-century, as ranching became an important economic activity, race and class restrictions on riding were loosened. During the eighteenth-century, riding competitions called *charreadas* began to be held as a means of showcasing the vaqueros' equestrian ability. These competitions involved showing off

riding skills, but also braving the risks involved. Participating as a charro became a means of "cultivating loyalty for the *patria chica*" (ibid. 4), and private militias were often formed from their ranks. In the nineteenth-century, the image of the charro was consolidated and charros became national heroes, renowned for their fame as riders, drinkers, and conquerors of women. Women were prohibited from this profession.

The twentieth-century saw a decline in the economic importance of ranching, and the charro turned into a nostalgic image. The National Charro Association was established in the 1920's as part of the folklorization of the figure, a process which was accelerated during Mexico's golden age of cinema: film idols like Jorge Negrete and Pedro Infante immortalized the charro in classic films of the 1930's and 1940's (see Ramírez Berg 1992), often in the context of representations of the 1910 Revolution. Nájera-Ramírez argues that the charro is intimately connected with the rise of machismo in the twentieth-century, just when the image gained popularity through cinema. The charro became part of an expression of Mexican manhood which revolved around local culture and a mistrust of outsiders (ibid. 9; see also Paredes 1993). Women have been recently admitted to the Charro Association, but their dress and riding are limited to specifically feminine styles. Significantly, as I mentioned in earlier chapters, the charro also has a long association with the Devil. Not only were the riders of ranchers of isolated regions considered to be more prone to making pacts with the Devil, the demon himself often appeared in the guise of a charro (see chapter one).

Like participating in the contest of the diablos of Teloloapan, participating in the Abrazo of Acatempan implies courage, risk-taking and manly skill. It is also a means of asserting "locality" by embodying the Guerrerenses who fought in the war for Independence and expressing a nostalgic longing for a simpler past.

MEMORY AND NOSTALGIA

Connerton writes that commemoration goes against the essence of modernity, which is characterized by constant change, development, innovation and progress. The formal structure of commemoration and its "celebration of recurrence" is a compensatory practice that promotes the reassuring, although false, sense of the unchanging, the constant (1989: 64). Perdurance, writes Casey, is basic to the functioning of commemorative ritual.

> It is through perdurance that the past, present and future dimensions of commemorative ritual are at once affirmed and made compatible with each other. In the lastingness achieved by such ritual the past to which tribute is paid is allowed to perdure—to last as coming toward us—through the present of the commemorative act and onward into the future as well (1987: 228).

The nostalgia expressed by Teloloapenses and Acatempenses, reminiscing about how the Abrazo used to be, supports the importance of perdurance, but also exhibits anxiety about change. Following is an account of the memories of Acatempense Don Filiberto, who played the part of Guerrero in the 1920's. Although he resided in Mexico City at the time of this interview, he returned every year to his natal Acatempan for the Abrazo.

Don Filiberto's father was in charge of the centennial celebration that Évila Franco attended in 1921. The organizers were able to convince then-president Álvaro Obregón to finance a fifteen-day festival. People came from all over. They thought they might be able to repeat the experience the following year, but there wasn't enough money.

He was told that the two generals signed the agreement underneath a huge *amate* tree in the hills, seated at a wooden table. And every year, the *Abrazo* is celebrated

exactly as it happed ("*tal y como fue, año con año*"). The table was left in the church in Acatempan, like a religious relic, and no one ever touched it. But some years later, the municipal president came from Teloloapan with the police and demanded the table. Even so, the custom of the Abrazo has not been lost. One generation goes, and another one comes.

Iturbide is usually portrayed by a "*rico*" from Teloloapan. Don Filiberto played the part of Guerrero for three years: 1928, 1929 and 1930. His father-in-law had also played the part. His own first year, his friends found him a horse from Cerro Gordo, a really big one. The owner didn't want to loan it out with much anticipation, so he got it in the morning and didn't have any time to practice. It was really difficult, because every horse has its own way of being handled. There were three hundred, four hundred, or five hundred horses in the *Abrazo* that year. Guerrero has to ride up by himself, or just with his assistant, and the public gets more excited that way. He has to look good. In 1928, as he said, his horse was really big. Iturbide's horse was smaller. It bumped into Don Filiberto's horse, and the man portraying Iturbide fell off. He got hurt under the hooves of the horses, but the people loved it. Now they are sent to practice at least a week ahead of time. The dialogue (*discurso*) is different, too. He has some papers somewhere that his father left him, written "*a pluma antigua y tintero.*" If he finds them, he'll call us.

He tells me about controversies over the date and the monuments that were erected. Some historians say that the *Abrazo* didn't take place on the 10th, but it did. "They've figured out the truth...it's been proven in the whole country that it was that day." When they built the latest monument, "the Governor and the *diputados* didn't want to include a statue of Iturbide because he was a traitor." They just wanted the statue of Guerrero, although the people wanted a representation of the *Abrazo*, with both generals. A woman who was listening in said that she heard that the statue they erected was really

of Vicente Riva Palacio (a historian, and grandson of Guerrero), and not of Vicente Guerrero, and was brought in from Arcelia in the Tierra Caliente. The PRD and the PRI couldn't agree. Finally, the representative from the PRD ("very stubborn and opinionated" according to Don Filiberto) won out. Many people in Acatempan want the statue changed.

The older monument that is in the plaza of Acatempan was erected for the centennial. There was an earlier monument, but with the passing of the years, it disappeared. Some people say (here he lowers his voice), that there are some documents hidden inside this older monument that prove that the Abrazo took place in Acatempan on the date celebrated. He thinks that they were probably put there during the Revolution of 1910, because the revolutionaries were going around and burning papers.[109] His grandfather told him, however, that no one could find documents that would corroborate the Abrazo because the event didn't really end the war for Independence. That happened in Iguala when Iturbide presented his flag for the first time, the one made by Magdaleno Ocampo. And they didn't take Mexico City until the 27th of September, when the consummation of Independence is officially commemorated.

But the *Abrazo* needs to go national. They need to close the schools and invite national television stations. It doesn't matter what some historians say, the Abrazo did not take place somewhere else, like the state of Mexico. Guerrero "*andaba en las montañas del sur"*, not in the center of the country. But no one remembers any more. "*Ya no hay gente...los viejitos...ya acabaron*." "There isn't anyone anymore…the old people…they are all gone."

[109] The municipal archives of Teloloapan were, in fact, burned during the Revolution. What is left of them, and what has been since accumulated, was being stored in an old warehouse. It was impossible to use them for research purposes when I lived in Teloloapan.

MISSING TABLES AND HIDDEN DOCUMENTS

The table mentioned by Evilita and Don Filiberto stuck in my mind—a material object, imbued with the aura of the hero Vicente Guerrero, identified with him through the power of contagion-based sympathetic magic, itself the basis of mimesis (Taussig 1993: 47-50). Asking around, I was told that it was either in a museum in Mexico City, or in Chilpancingo. (The *Así Somos* issue dedicated to Cocula also mentions a table.) A few months later, I found the famous table in the Regional Museum of Guerrero, located in Chilpancingo. It was exhibited underneath an 1870 oil painting of the Abrazo (the same painting mentioned in the first note of this chapter). The labels identifying the tale read, "Table that belonged to Vicente Guerrero" and "Donated by the Villavivencio Altamirano family of Teloloapan." There were two unidentified chairs nearby. In an interview I did with historian Edgar Pavía in Chilpancingo in April of 2000, he argued that the presence of that table in the museum was evidence of a lack of real scientific concern. (The exact phrase he used to characterize the museum was "tutti frutti.") It's supposed to be a regional museum, and they even have things from Cuba. But in Guerrero, "what they don't know, they invent." Real historians need to leave these controversies to one side, and concentrate on what can really be researched and proven. (The museum authorities seem to have implemented a de-tutti fruttifying process: I visited it again in 2007, and found that, although the table was still on display, the first label mentioning Vicente Guerrero had been removed.)

I find myself haunted by another set of objects—the documents Don Filiberto says are hidden inside the old monument in the center of Acatempan. It is as if bodies and place aren't enough to ground the commemoration of the Abrazo in historical reality: objects and texts are needed as well (see Casey 1987: 231).

> Speech leaves no mark in space; like gesture, it exists in its immediate context and can reappear only in another's voice, another's body, even if that other is the same speaker transformed by history. But writing contaminates; writing leaves its trace, a trace beyond the life of the body. Thus, while speech gains authenticity, writing promises immortality, or at least the immortality of the material world in contrast to the mortality of the body. Our terror of the unmarked grave is a terror of the insignificance of the world without writing. The metaphor of the unmarked grave is one which joins the mute and the ambivalent; without the mark there is no boundary, no point at which to begin the repetition (Stewart 1993: 31).

We have seen the importance of where monuments are erected and what images they contain in Acatempan. One monument marks the location of the Abrazo, so participants know "when to begin the repetition," and another marks the center of town, giving it a particular historical identity and political-geographical position. These monuments, concrete objects, are themselves the subjects of ideological struggles. But without them, all that is left are unmarked graves.

And what of these tantalizing documents, whose existence would absolutely confirm the authenticity of the tradition, "promising the immortality of the material world in contrast to the mortality of the body? They are invisible, unavailable, even if they are hidden close at hand. However, removed to the inviolable sanctuary of a monument's innards, the documents become uncontestable. Who can say that they do not, in fact, exist? Perhaps they also rely on sympathetic magic—not through contact, but mimetically, through resemblance to the history they purport to justify. I think of the older version of the dialogue, written "*en pluma antigua y tintero*," which also fails to materialize. Tradition justifies the ritual, which in turn, justifies tradition. Like the phantasmagorical documents, the past itself is uncanny, refusing to be pinned down, or "fixed" once and for all (despite Don Filiberto's belief that the Abrazo is performed "*tal y como fue, año con año*." Missing tables and hidden documents are ghostly objects that hover in the realm of the unheimlich, standing, as they do "at the crossroads of sign and

thing" (Taussig 1993: 56), promise, but never deliver, concrete proof of "what really happened.

The Old Monument, Acatempan

Chapter 5. Ixcateopan de Cuauhtémoc: The Battle of the Bones

Claudio Lomnitz argues that, following Independence, Mexico underwent a "spectral revolution" during which the remains of the dead heroes of the war were exhumed from their original resting places and taken in great pomp to be reburied in Mexico City. Throughout the nineteenth century, the treatment of these and other remains reflected changes in national policy and came to be seen as one means of mobilizing public opinion in the process of State consolidation (2006: 338). Hidalgo, Morelos and other caudillos were interred in the National Cathedral, where their names were inscribed on the walls in gold. Vicente Guerrero was buried and exhumed at least four times. He was originally buried in Oaxaca, where he had been shot in 1831. His remains were removed to the cathedral in Oaxaca City, but were hidden in the wall after the archbishop heard a rumor that the bones were going to be stolen. The urn was in fact stolen, but the ashes survived to be re-buried in cathedral in Mexico City in 1842. In 1925, along with the remains of Hidalgo and others, Guerrero's bones found their final resting place inside the monument to Independence on the Paseo de la Reforma. The bones of Iturbide were buried in the National Cathedral in 1838, but were not deemed patriotic enough for removal to the Independence monument.

But the bones "discovered" in Ixcateopan in 1949 probably represent the most infamous struggle over the physical remains of historical figures in Mexico. Lomnitz concludes that

> The case of Ichcateopan reveals the real transformations in the policies of the body between the nineteenth and the middle and end of the twentieth century since, in this case, despite public and presidential support for the authenticity of the bones, scientific opinion was maintained. For the rest, it didn't help much that the bones belonged to a woman (ibid. 359).

Indeed, the case of Ixcateopan does bring to the fore debates over scientific versus popular historiographic discourse. But in stating the "scientific opinion was maintained" only gives us a partial conclusion to the story, as anyone who has traveled to Ixcateopan in February can testify. This dead emperor refuses to stay buried, despite the firm conviction of scientific authorities.

In January of 2000, Fidel and I visited Ixcateopan de Cuauhtémoc,[110] where we were treated to a long talk with Don Jairo Rodríguez del Olmo, *encargado* of the tomb of Cuahtémoc, the last Emperor of the Aztecs, who was defeated by the Spaniards in 1521 and hung by Cortés several years later. As Don Jairo gave us a tour of the old church and the grounds, we talked about the history of Ixcateopan, the "discovery" of the tomb by Eulalia Guzmán, the arrival of national dignitaries like Diego Rivera, the various posterior commissions sent by the INAH to investigate, and the ensuing polemic aptly named "the battle of the bones" which quickly went beyond questions of archeology and local identity. The controversy surrounding the remains excavated in Ixcateopan in 1949 involved rival ideologies about the history and essence of the Mexican people; local, state and national political interests; and philosophical and methodological conflicts between competing understandings of the past.

We also discussed the commemorations of the "discovery" of the remains and the death of Cuauhtémoc, which take place in Ixcateopan in September and February, respectively. These two events bring into focus all of the issues surrounding the

[110] Ixcateopan is the *cabecera* of the municipio of the same name. It is located about 36 kilometers from Taxco, which lies to the north.. It can also be reached from the Iguala-Teloloapan highway from the south. The municipio covers around 400 square kilometers and has 6,104 inhabitants, according to the 200-2005 population count realized by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography. Only 0.4% is considered indigenous (www.inegi.gob.mx). The main economic activities, apart from subsistence farming, are the extraction of marble (all the streets are paved in this material), the fabrication of colonial-style cedar furniture, and a modest tourism, particularly during the Festival of Cuauhtémoc in February.

controversy, as well as the reasons for ongoing local, national and international interest in Ixcateopan and its most famous cadaver.

In this chapter, I take up these questions, which revolve around bodies, places, documents, monuments, oral tradition, performance, blood, culture, authenticity and scientific practice. I start with a comparison between "scientific" historiography and the local tradition that tells of the life and death of Cuauhtémoc as part of an Ixcateopan-centered narrative that conflicts with the official version of the last Aztec leader's history. This tradition, which may be of relatively recent origin, is based on a mixture of documents and oral accounts said to have been passed down since the sixteenth-century through the generations of a local family. I discuss the elements of the tradition which have been called upon to justify the local version of historical events and include the collection of texts and pictorial documents owned by the Juárez family, the archaeological ruins found in Ixcateopan, the colonial church of Santa María de la Asunción, and a series of regional performance traditions which some interpret as references to the death of Cuauhtémoc and removal of his remains to Ixcateopan.

I continue with an analysis of the events surrounding Eulalia Guzmán's "discovery" of the bones in 1949 and an examination of the "battle of the bones," a controversy in which politicians, scientists, artists and writers invoked a wide variety of discourses which centered around the role of Cuauhtémoc as a national symbol, as well as the "truth" about the bones in question. This polemic continues to this day, and has become a bone of contention among Ixcateopenses and other Guerrerenses proud of their "native son," Mexican scholars who feel that the controversy makes a mockery of scientific evidence, and pilgrims who travel from all over the world to honor Cuauhtémoc and Ixcateopan as the "cradle of *mexicanidad*." In the next section of this chapter, I analyze the two commemorations which take place in Ixcateopan in September (the

anniversary of the exhumation of the remains) and February (the anniversaries of the birth and death of Cuauhtémoc) and discuss the reasons for which large numbers both indigenous and non-indigenous visitors from America and Europe descend on tiny Ixcateopan each year. Along with the encounter called the *Carrera del Águila y el Condor* which took place in October of 2000, these events provide a space for the emergence and discussion of the concepts of blood, culture and ethnic identity.

Finally, I raise the issue of "the other Ixcateopan," a town in another region of Guerrero which, in the aftermath of the 1949 discovery, also came to stake a claim to being the burial site of Cuauhtémoc. In Ixcateopan de la Montaña, a counternarrative has been constructed to the Ixcateopan de Cuauhtémoc narrative (itself a counternarrative in relation to official historiography) which underscores the complex relations between centers and peripheries in Mexico.

"SCIENTIFIC" HISTORIOGRAPHY

> Rational, well-argued explanation sustained in objective facts….scientifically elaborated knowledge from the diverse actions and creations of men from other epochs, captured from the point of view of our epochs….The fight for scientific history is much more than the defense of an intellectual discipline; it is the reaffirmation of the possibility of discovering the roots of social development and of understanding the future tendencies of humankind, establishing a transformatory practice based upon them. This should be the finality of any scientific discipline (Bustamante and Salazar 1998: 16-18).

Both chroniclers and "scientific" historians differ as to the date of Cuauhtémoc's birth. Some, like Cortés himself, declare that he was eighteen years old at the time of the conquest, which would mean he was born in 1502; others, like Bernal Díaz de Castillo, describe him as a mature young man of twenty five when the Spaniards occupied Tenochtitlan, changing the year of his birth to 1496. Still others mention that he was born

in 1502, but Alfonso Caso declared that he was a child in 1502 when Ahuizotl, his father, died and therefore, must have been born in 1500. For her part, Eulalia Guzmán was convinced that he was born in 1501 (Muriel 1966: 57).

Cuauhtémoc's parentage and place of birth are also the subjects of disagreement among historians. Eulalia Guzmán, of course, affirmed that he was born in Zompancuahuitl, the old name of Ixcateopan, to a local princess and the son of the Emperor Ahuizotl. However, most other historians agree that he was the son of Ahuizotl the king, and that there never existed a son with the same name (the naming of sons after their fathers was not a common practice among the Mexica). The majority also agree that his mother was a princess of Tlatelolco, although her name is rarely mentioned. Some discrepancies arise in this context, because the early chroniclers referred to Cuauhtémoc as the nephew of Moctezuma. If he were the son of Ahuizotl the king, as Ahuizotl and Moctezuma were brothers, he would have been Moctezuma's cousin (ibid. 60). However, since he probably became the lord (or at least, military chief) of Tlatelolco before the Conquest, most historians agree that it would not make sense for him to be the son of a princess from a small subject town like Ixcateopan.

His ascension to the throne of Tenochtitlan appears to have obeyed the laws of necessity rather than strict inheritance rules. Cuitláhuac (and many other Mexica nobles) had died, and Cuauhtémoc seems to have had the required nobility and personal qualities to lead his people against the Spaniards. His role in defending the city is unquestioned, as is his eventual surrender.[111] There is one episode which has captured the attention of both amateur and professional historians: the loss of the "treasure of Moctezuma" and subsequent torture of Cuauhtémoc. It is known that Cuauhtémoc was brought before

[111] For accounts of this period based on colonial chronicles, as well as a comparison between prehispanic and Spanish historiography, see Baudot and Todorov (1990).

Cortés and tortured either by burning his hands or feet, although historians disagree as to the cause. The most accepted theory is that Cortés wished to know what had happened to the Aztec riches that remained in the city of Tenochtitlan. Cuauhtémoc never revealed the fate of the treasure, having either spent it or thrown it away to keep it from the Spaniards, and the gold was never found. This has lead to numerous legends all over the country (including Ixcateopan) about hidden treasure buried in caves, or other "enchanted" sites.

The marriage and descent of the hero are shrouded in doubts, as well. It is known that he was in fact married, but not all agree as to the identity of his wife, or wives. The woman most commonly mentioned was Moctezuma's daughter Tecuichpo, later christened Isabela. But other sources state that his wife was Tecuichpo's older sister Xuchimatzatzin, baptized with the name María (ibid. 63).[112] Some sources say that Cuauhtémoc had one daughter, who disappeared. Others, like Eulalia Guzmán, mention various children, linking them to the Chimalpopoca family. Still another allegation is that of the Mendoza Austria Moctezuma family, who claim to be descendents of Cuauhtémoc and María (oldest daughter of Moctezuma).

There are as many questions about Cuauhtémoc's death as there are about his birth. It is universally accepted that he was forced to accompany Cortés on his journey to Las Hibueras (presumably recovered from the burns to his feet). Whether or not he conspired with local leader Paxbolonacha to rebel against the Spaniards is not so clear. He was certainly accused of treason, and put to death for it, either by being hung from a

[112] Tecuichpo is a rather fascinating historical figure, who had, according to many sources, been married to Cuitláhuac before Cuauhtémoc. After the latter's death, she became the lover of Cortés, and the wife of three successive conquistadores: Alonso de Grado, Pedro Gallego and Juan Cano. She appears to have embraced Christianity, and her daughters became "the first mestiza nuns of America" (Muriel 1966: 64). She had one illegitimate daughter with Cortes, one son with Pedro Gallego, and five children with Juan Cano. Her descendents became the Cano Moctezuma family, "the most Mexican of all mestizo families" (ibid.). There is no record of her having children by Cuitláhuac or Cuauhtémoc. See Chipman (2005) for her geneology.

tree, decapitated, or stabbed in the neck (ibid. 113). A friar was executed along with Cuauhtémoc, but is not named in historical documents. Eulalia Guzmán affirms that the friar was Juan de Tecto, but other historians claim that de Tecto had already died of hunger during the expedition. The executions took place in 1525, either on February 26th or February 28th, the Sunday or the Tuesday of Carnival, in "the province of Acallan," which has been identified with several possible modern sites, including the Petén region of Guatemala, Chiapas, and Tenosique or Canitzán in the state of Tabasco (ibid. 108; Olivera 1980: 44-45; see also Scholes and Roy 1968, Gurría 1976). Another controversy revolves around whether or not Cuauhtémoc was a Christian when he died. It is very likely that he was baptized, and that he took the name "Fernando" or "Hernando" after his godfather, Cortés. Some authors are unwilling to admit that the hero of the defense of Tenochtitlan would have accepted a conversion to the enemy's religion (see letter to the editor of *Excelsior* cited in Moreno 1980: 137). According to Eulalia Guzmán, the fact that he was technically a Catholic justified his being buried underneath the church in Ixcateopan.

Finally, the last and greatest controversy concerns what happened to the remains of Cuauhtémoc after his execution. The tradition of Ixcateopan is not the only theory: Muriel writes that they were likely cremated, as befitted a Mexica noble (1966: 114). There is a tradition in Tabasco that states that the remains of Cuauhtémoc were buried in a local *finca*; some half-hearted investigations were made in 1909, and again in 1926, but were inconclusive (Olivera 1980: 44). Most historians agree that the final resting place of Cuauhtémoc will never be known. And Muriel concludes that,

> Biography ends when the person dies. If his body was incinerated, as corresponded to his category of emperor, his ashes or half-burned bones may or may not exist somewhere; what is important is that something more valuable, his spirit, the actions that conferred upon him the status of hero, escape the concrete

> limits of some bones and an urn, and extend themselves all over the earth, because where any man exists who is capable of valuing the significance of man's fundamental liberties, the figure of Cuauhtémoc will take on flesh and become an eternal reality" (1966: 114).

THE TRADITION *TANTO ORAL COMO ESCRITA*

The tradition of Ixcateopan, *tanto oral como escrita*, rests on the conceptualization of a particular cast of characters who bring to life a local historical imaginary, although their lives and deeds may differ from accepted Mexican historiography. According to the documents of the Juárez collection (Reyes 1979), Cuauhtémoc was born on the 23 of February of 1504 (Don Jairo states he was born in 1500, reinforcing the idea that the celebrations of 2000 were to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Cuauhtémoc's birth) in Zompancuahuitl, the son of the princess Cuayutital and the prince Ahuitzotzin (son of the Aztec emperor Ahuizotl). The name Cuauhtémoc means "Descending Eagle," although some translate it as "Falling Eagle," a name which would seem to presage his martyrdom and the fall of the Aztec empire.

In 1516 he was sent to live with his father's family in Tenochtitlan in order to study, and was then returned to Zompancuahuitl, until, along with all the other tributary kings, he was called to the defense of the "*patria mexicana*." Cuauhtémoc returned to Tenochtitlan in place of his grandfather Cuauyautila, lord of Zompancuaguitl. He (Cuauhtémoc) became lord of Tlateloco, and commanded by Moctezuma to defend that city. It is also said that he became lord of Tezcoco in Azcapuzalco, as well as *tecatecutl*, or warlord, in the royal palace of Tenochtitlan. Upon the death of Moctezuma, he was named king (in another part of the document, it is said that he became king after Cuitláhuac, Moctezuma's successor, died). In one document, it says that Cuauhtémoc was a chaste warrior who never married. In another, it mentions his marriage to

Cuitláhuac's widow Tecuichpo, later baptized Isabel; and in another, it mentions a second marriage to a young woman called Citlalli, with whom he had children (the ancestors of the Moctezuma Chimalpopoca family; for the presumed genealogy of the family, see Roldán 1980: 241-243).

After the completion of the Conquest, Cuauhtémoc was captured, and tortured by Cortés. His feet were burned so that he would reveal the location of a cache of hidden gold, but the hero only said, "Am I, perhaps, resting on a bed of roses?" He was forced to accompany Cortés on his expedition to Las Hibueras, where he was falsely accused of conspiring with the local leader Paxbolonacha. On February 28, 1525, Carnival Tuesday, Cortés hung Cuauhtémoc, Juan de Tecto and some other "Mexican" lords from a *ceiba* tree, where their bodies remained for more than thirteen days, after which, between twenty five and thirty of his followers took down the cadaver, wrapped it in *tilmas*, and transported it back to Zompancuahuitl, following circuitous routes so that they would not be followed. The document mentions several of the towns in which they stayed: Zacualpan, Tlapacoya, Alpixafia, Teloloapan (the Tecampana), Chinaucla (now unknown, perhaps near Acatempan). One part of the document also mentions that the procession passed through Iguala (referred to as Iguala de Iturbide). The name Iguala, or Yohuala, they claim, signifies "he (or it) is coming," a reference to the body of Cuauhtémoc.[113] Upon reaching Zompancuahuitl, Cuauhtémoc's followers buried his

[113] The nearby town of Pachivia also lays claim to being the birthplace of Cuauhtémoc's mother. And in Coatepec Costales, mentioned in chapter four, there is a large mural at the entrance to the town which reads: "Coatepec Costales: Birthplace of Cuauhtémoc's Grandmother." A local man told me that the Cuauhtémoc's mother had been taken prisoner by the Mexica, and had met Cuauhtémoc's father in Tenochtitlan. In Coatepec, which means mountain of the serpent, there is an alternative version of the toponymy of Iguala. It is said that in the *ceros* around Coatepec, there lived a large, winged serpent. Upon occasion, this serpent would fly away and terrorize nearby towns. The names of many of these towns have something to do with the serpent; Iguala, "it is coming," refers to the serpent, not the body of Cuauhtémoc. Other, perhaps more accepted, interpretations of "Iguala" ("Yohuala") include "plateau surrounded by mountains" and "plateau where dew or night rain falls."

body, along with that of Juan de Tecto, inside his "palace." They told the secret to some friars, who advised them to keep silent. Motolinía (the same friar who called Mexico "hell" as I mentioned in chapter two) arrived in 1529, discovered the secret, and had Cuauhtémoc reburied and a Catholic Church built over his tomb.

> And after having buried Cuauhtémoc and built the church—which they called Santa María de la Asunción—Friar Toribio de Benaventes [also called] Motolinía, leaves a manuscript with one of Cuauhtémoc's mother's brothers, who was called Iluxihuitl, although they changed his name to José Amado Amador Moctezuma Chimalpopoca. He is the head of the tradition, *tanto oral como escrita* [both the oral and written tradition]. Um, this man, to whom the manuscript is left, leaves the tradition in turn to one of his sons, José Amado Amador Perico Moctezuma Chimalpopoca. And in this way, in succession, the tradition comes from fathers to sons, the tradition *tanto oral como escrita*, until it comes to a man called Salvador Rodríguez Juárez, whose family had been forced to take other last names because [the Spaniards had been persecuting] the last survivors of the Moctezuma Chimalpopoca families. The Moctezumas took the name of Juárez, and the Chimalpopocas took the name of Galindo. Most of the Galindos emigrated, to what is today Zaculapan and the Valley of Mexico.
>
> If you would like to ask any other questions, I think I am capable of answering, because at the age of seven, my father did me the favor of naming me his heir within the tradition. When this happened, I was seven, six years old, and as a small child I knew that Cuauhtémoc was buried in this place. So I am, in this case, the thirteenth *carta viva* within the tradition, *tanto oral como escrita*. I am following the same path, since I have already prepared one of my sons. I taught him the tradition and everything, so that we can go on sharing our roots as Mexicans. And we keep on, since there is a decree from Don Miguel Alemán Valdéz [President of Mexico from 1946-1952], that states that the family will remain guardians of the tradition, *tanto oral como escrita* (Don Jairo, Ixcateopan 2000).

This narrative depends on a series of historical particulars, all of which have been questioned by "scientific" historians. First, the existence of the royal family of Zompancuahuitl (later Ixcateopan)—the king Cuauyautila and his daughter Cuayutital, or Cuayauhitali. (It is important to note that in this story, Zompancuahuitl was considered an important kingdom, and was much more vast than the modern municipio of Ixcateopan.)

A second important element in the story is the relationship between Cuayauhitali and the Emperor's son Ahuitzotzin (in the tradition, an appropriate matrimonial alliance between equals) and the resulting birth of their son, Cuauhtémoc.[114] Third, the story considers the ascension of Cuauhtémoc to the throne of Tenochtitlan to a result of his position as lord of Zompancuahuitl and member of the ruling Mexica family; his position in Tenochtitlan before he became *Huey Tlatoani* is not necessarily clear. A fourth element is the question of whether or not Cuauhtémoc had children, and with which wife. A fifth element is his torture at the hands of Cortés. A sixth is the false accusation of conspiracy against the Spaniards. The seventh element is the recovery of his body by his followers (along with that of Juan de Tecto), the trajectory of the procession, and finally, its final resting place beneath the church in Ixcateopan. This, the most important component of the narrative, rests on the notion that noble Mexicas were traditionally buried in the places of their births.

About this tradition, Dr. Salvador Rodríguez writes,

> I am sure that these are the ashes of Cuauhtémoc, because tradition exists as part of a Law, and this Law was life or death. The tradition of our ancestors was not dirty; it was very well studied, according to the Juárez family. There was a Law of Tradition that states that when a lord of a certain magnitude, of a distinguished grade and from a clean dynastic lineage, died far away, it was necessary, because of the Law of Tradition, return him to the land of his birth to give him an appropriate burial, according to the custom of those times.
>
> …Other "dirty" men of these times have not respected our Laws of Tradition, and they have not known how to interpret them. They have calumnied our race…many chroniclers have said that our race is cannibalistic. Cowards! Miserable men with little knowledge, little science, little investigation!
>
> The Law of Tradition demands that this lord must be buried in the land of his birth.

[114] This romantic story brings to mind the Teloloapense legend of the Tecampana: a Romeo and Juliet tale of a love affair between "Tecampa" (another fictional son of Ahuizotl, who had conquered the entire region) and "Na," a Chontal princess from Teloloapan.

> The burial of our ancestors was clean, benign, beautiful. Filthy things were not given to our mother the earth, because the earth is not guilty; the earth in whose entrails it took us thousands and thousands of years to confirm the Law of Tradition (Rodríguez 1987: 7).

Where bodies come into being, how they leave the earth and what happens to their remains: bodies and places are the fundamental themes of Ixcateopan's historical poetics. In order to understand this local imaginary, we must take up tradition as it became/becomes inscribed in objects, texts and other concrete forms.

Documents and Codices

The most impressive document in the Juárez papers is one said to have been signed by Motolinía in 1529, confirming that the friar had presided over the interment of Cuauhtémoc's remains. In colonial script, it reads,

> I leave with these *naturales* these writings so that they may be conserved as a document for these poor, miserable Indians so that they may know the great treasure and pride of this land, cradle of their lord King Coatemo, who I know as a brave and decent man, whom I admire in this land of Ychicateopan. They told me that here he has his father and his mother who lived here until three years ago, she was called Cuatlautita which says cuatlaute tree, of a very fine and beautiful aroma, and that this tree is in the house of their Lord, ten men standing arms' length apart, his palace is luxurious, with jewels made of precious stones, statues honoring their gods, made of black and green stones, fine, colored cloths and the feathers of beautiful birds…I saw everything I write down here, so that these poor Indians have the natural right to honor for his bravery their Lord King Coatemo, native of these lands. These natives had told me that he belonged to the chontal race, which ruled all of this land from Zacoalpan, Chontalcuatlan to Acamista and Catahualla by the river…that grand was this land called Zompancuali, or Ixcatemoteopan, which says here is your Lord King Coatemo…it is also said that it is called Zonpancuaguil and they say its belly is made of silver because its form is that of a scorpion with its tail, and the tracts of forests of cedar and green oak, their work is the honey with fine aromas. No one copy this, because I am forbidden to write down the life of this Lord King…only for love of my children and for God I have no fear of the ruffians of the Holy Office of Penitence. I leave this with these miserable chontal Indians, I, the Re. P. Motolinía. *Signature* (Reyes 1979: 63-64).

The signature on this document and the other three bearing the rubric of Motolinía, as much their content and reputed age, is what gives these texts their aura. The other documents in the collection include manuscripts said to be from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century, written by the heirs of the Moctezuma Chimalpopoca family, as well as the nineteenth-century notebooks of Florentino Rodríguez. These manuscripts are accompanied by various documents relating to the family of Don Florentino, including birth certificates, letters, receipts, and other official papers and correspondence; as well as newspaper clippings and memoranda related to the 1949 "discovery" of the remains. Some say that the most ancient documents had been hidden in an image of the Virgin de la Asunción in the possession of Salvador Rodríguez—a story reminiscent of the papers said to be hidden in the monument in Acatempan.

In addition to texts, the collection contains a series of pictographic documents, maps and codices. These have become known as the Juárez Codex, which consists of: two pages with pictures of human footprints (used in prehispanic and colonial codices to represent travel); one page with human footprints, a pyramid, a tree with human heads, and a plan of a church with a burial; and fragments of copies of parochial registries of baptisms and deaths.

Those who defend the tradition of Ixcateopan (see for example Rodríguez 1986, Roldán 1980) also refer to extra local documents, particularly codices whose authenticity has been scientifically verified. Part of the Codex Ríos (or Vatican Codex) (referred to in Ixcateopan in the Codex of 1528), for example, refers to the hanging of Cuauhtémoc in Acalán, featuring a pictograph of two lords hanging from a tree and the glyph of Cuauhtémoc, along with a drawing of a friar (the above-mentioned Juan de Tecto) also being hung. The Lienzo of Tlapa, a colonial pictographic document tracing the genealogy

of indigenous lords in the mountain region of Guerrero, also includes a glyph of Ixcateopan, which refers to a different town by the same name a few kilometers north of Tlapa (see below for more on Ixcateopan de la Montaña). From the same region is the Codex Azoyú II, which refers to the tributes the inhabitants of that region (including the Ixcateopan near Tlapa) had to pay to the Mexicas. Other codices mentioning this second Ixcateopan are the Lienzo II of Chiepetlan, the Codex of Cualac, the Lienzo of Aztactépec and Citlaltépec, and the *Palimpsesto de Veinte Mazorcas*. This last document has been used extensively to justify the Ixcateopan tradition. It features the glyph of Ixcateopan and a figure whose glyph includes an eagle. This document, however, has been determined to be prehispanic (one of two prehispanic codices found in Guerrero). It appears to be a historical-cartographic document, referring to the wars between the local Yope lords and Mexica warriors. Again, the Ixcateopan featured refers to the Ixcateopan of the region of Tlapa, and the figure with the eagle glyph is said to represent the lord Cuauhtil of Atlamaxac, not Cuauhtémoc (Barlow 1961). Two codices verified as being from the northern region of Guerrero which are also mentioned as part of the Ixcateopan tradition are the Lienzo of Nochtépec and the Map of Chontalcoatlán, both of which refer to colonial encounters (both peaceful and bellicose) between Spaniards and indigenous inhabitants of the region (see Jiménez and Villela 1998 for descriptions of all of these codices).

It seems that there is a magic in codices, which emerges from their antiquity combined with the symbolic power of the ancestors inscribed in esoteric glyphs and colonial scribblings in Nahuatl, Mixteco, or Tlapaneco. The glyphs, though, are what imbue the codices with their power; for Ixcateopense historians, places which are manifest in pictorial form are particularly potent indexes of historical depth and authenticity. While textual documents may provide authority for specific historical

exegesis, pictographs are flexible. They engage the gap between signifier and signified, allowing for multiple interpretations, which local historians are able to exploit.[115]

Zompancuahuitl

According to the Codex Mendocino, a sixteenth-century pictographic document listing the tributes owed to the Mexicas, the glyph representing the prehispanic town of Ixcateopan, sometimes written Ichcateopan, is a pyramid crowned with a cotton blossom, and, according to accepted Nahuatl etymology, the name of the town means "in the temple of cotton" (*ixcatl* is cotton, and *teopantil* is temple) (Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero 1988: 213), But part of the tradition *tanto oral como escrita* of Ixcateopan rests on a different interpretation. According to Don Jairo, Ixcateopan was originally called "Zompancuahuitl," which he interprets as consisting of the two phrases *zompatli* (a kind of tree) and *cuahuitl* (white). Not until after Cuauhtémoc was buried there was the name changed to Ixcateopan, which he says was really Ichicatemoteopan, a mix of Chontal[116] and Nahuatl terms, meaning "Here in the church made of stone is your respected lord." With time, the chontal terms were lost, and only the Nahuatl part, "Nichcateopan," remained. It finally became "Ichcatl" (cotton) "teopan" (church). This toponimical interpretation is part of the elaborate justification for local tradition.

***The* Momoxtle**

Part of the imaginary of Cuauhtémoc revolves around the idea that Ixcateopan had once been an important regional kingdom, and many point to the existence of prehispanic ruins as proof of this past glory. These ruins are located at the entrance to town (coming from the Iguala-Teloloapan highway), and are often referred to as the *momoxtle* (from the

[115] This is not a new phenomenon. Both Spaniards and Indians altered codices at different times as a means of justifying political action, land grants, etc. (Raúl Véles, personal comunicación).
[116] See chapter one, note two.

Nahuatl word "*momoztli*", meaning altar, although the word is generally used to refer to a mound of stones or prehispanic ruins). The ruins have been almost destroyed, because before the "discovery" in 1949, the inhabitants used the site as a quarry, incorporating the stones into the chapel of San José and the fences surrounding their own houses. After the interest generated by the possible presence of the tomb of Cuauhtémoc, the *momoxtle* was excavated and converted into a protected archeological site. Some say the *momoxtle* is haunted, and that at midnight on the day of San Juan, a kind of market appears to tempt those passing by with attractive wares, but that anyone who enters is trapped when the *encanto* disappears (Olivera 1980: 120). Some remember that, around the time of the Revolution, people began to talk about the *momoxtle* in relation to the family of Cuauhtémoc, but the majority of Ixcateopenses became aware of the connection after 1949, when it began to be referred to as "*el palacio de Cuauhtémoc*" (ibid. 122).

The Church

The remains of Cuauhtémoc are displayed in front of the altar of what was the church of Santa María de la Asunción, patron saint of Ixcateopan. The site is no longer used as a church; a new one was built facing it to house the official parish. Apparently, there was a tradition in existence before 1949 based on the idea that "something," either a treasure, or some documents, or an important personage, was buried in the back of the church, and that one had to bare one's head or show some other sign of respect when passing that spot. After 1949, it became general knowledge that that "something" was the remains of Cuauhtémoc (Olivera 1980: 109).

According to tradition, the original church was built in 1529 by Motolinía, although some elements were added later. During our tour of the grounds, Don Jairo commented:

Look, here outside. Many people say that this church isn't even, even two hundred years old. An archeologist from Toluca came and told me, "This church isn't even so old." And I can be really rude when someone makes me mad, and I told her, "Listen, without a doubt those people, two years ago or two hundred, however old you say this church is, had to be really talented." "Why?" "I'll tell you why, because they built the doors first, and then they built the church." "What?" "Yes, yes, yes. Because these doors have been around for more than two hundred years. And the church itself isn't that old? Very talented." These doors were erected on the…19th of…April…of 1769, right? Now, up there in the middle, there is a date—1539—when they finished the church. Now look, and tell me if this church isn't old. Above the cross there is an emblem, which represents something. There is the other emblem, which represents something else. So tell me, what do they represent? ["I need my glasses."] You should know these two things [he says to me]. Look, that mark above that cross is stained. It's an emblem which is representing something. That other mark, above the other cross, is representing something else. And they are very important symbols in Mexico. Let's see…["I can't see too well," I say.] It represents WATER, so you can stop suffering. Look, this is water. This. And that one is the sun, or fire. So if, if this church isn't so old, a church built a few years ago, why did they put those there? Two hundred years, why would they put those emblems there? Which are now, thousands of years old, right? Of course, there are the crown and the keys and all, which is the PAPal shield, we can't forget that the Catholic Spaniards built this. And if we go to any temple from the 16th century, there is one of these, a relic, of our ancestors. Of course, they did that to attract the native's attention. For his evangelization.

Another thing, a while back, they took down the main altar in the cathedral of, um, Cuernavaca. They moved it to the side. What did they find underneath the altar? The goddess MiQUIxtil, the goddess of DEATH, right? So that's a RElic from that period, why? To bring the native to his evangelization. Don't you think? ["Sure, why not?" I answer. "It wouldn't be so strange…"] Because I'm sure that THEY wouldn't go on their own. They went because…there is a dance here, called the *tecuani*, for example. They had to come and dance here…it's become the tradition that that dance is for the Santo Niño. But they had to come and dance here. There is a, some songs in Nahuatl. I don't know them anymore, I have to say. But the song of the *ahuiltl*, a song of the hanged man, a song of who-knows-who, is in Nahuatl. That's right.[117]

[117] Mire, aquí afuera, muchos dicen que esta iglesia no tiene ni, ni, dos cientos años de construida. Una arqueóloga de Toluca vino y me dijo, "Esta iglesia ni tiene ni tantos años," y yo soy muy grosero cuando me hacen enojar, le digo, "Oiga, no cabe duda de que aquellos de hace dos años, o doscientos años que dice que tiene la iglesia, por lo menos eran muy fregones, ¿por qué? Le digo porque primero pusieron las puertas y después hicieron la iglesia." "¿COMO?" [He walks outside with us to show us the doors.] "Sí, sí, sí. Porque estas puertas tienen doscientos y tantos años de estar puestas, ¿y la iglesia no tiene doscientos

So we see more emblems, dates, concrete evidence of antiquity and authenticity. Old stones, a church, stories of enchantments and mysterious hidden treasures link Ixcateopan to an imagined past filled with grandeur, and a modern imaginary in which the town once more takes center stage.

The Altar of Cuauhtémoc, Ixcateopan

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años? Son muy fregones." Estas puertas se pusieron el, 19 de, abril, de 1769, ¿no? Ahora, allá arriba en medio tiene una fecha, 1539, en que se terminó la iglesia. Ahora mire....si esta iglesia no es antigua, sobre la cruz está un escudo, y representa algo. A ver, allá está otro escudo, que representa otra cosa. A ver, ¿qué representa? [me: "Ay, necesito mis lentes."] Si no está antigua esta iglesia, Debe conocer las dos cosas. [me: "A ver."] Mire, aquel de sobre esa cruz, está manchado bastante. Es un escudo que está representando algo. Aquel otro que está sobre aquella cruz, está representando otra. Y son símbolos muy GRANdes en nuestro México. A ver, (he laughs). [me: "Casi no alcanzo ver."] Es al AGUA, pa´que ya no sufra. Mire, este es el agua. este. Y aquel es el del sol, o del fuego. Entonces si no, si esta iglesia no es antigua, una iglesia de hace dos años, ¿para qué le pusieron? Doscientos años, ¿pa´que le pusieron estos escudos? Que ya son de, miles de años. ¿no? Claro, que está el, la TIARA y las LLAVES y todo, que es el escudo paPAL, no hay que olvidar que, lo construyeron los espaÑOLes, catÓLicos. Y si vamos a cualquier templo que sea del siglo 16, hay un este, una reliquia, de nuestros antepasados. Claro (?) que esto lo hicieron con la intención, de atraer al nativo. Para su evangelización.

Que nos es cierto vamos, hace poco a que quitaron el altar mayor, de, la catedral de, de este, de, Cuernavaca. Lo pasaron para este lado. ¿Qué cosa encontraron debajo del altar mayor? A la diosa MiQUIxtli, la diosa de la MUERte, ¿no? Entonces, que...es una reLIquia de aquella época ¿pa´que? Para traer al nativo a su evangelización. ¿No cree eso? [me: Sí, para que no, no sea tan extraño la..."] Porque por ELLOS yo estoy seguro que no iban. Iban porque, aquí hay una danza el tecuani por ejemplo que (deberían?) a bailar aquí ya se ha hecho tradición que es al Santo Niño esa danza. Pero deberían bailar aquí. Hay (?) una, los cantos en Nahuatl. Y o ya no, no, no me los sé, la verdad. Pero un canto del *ahuitl*, un canto del ahorcado, un canto de quien sabe que tanto, están en Nahuatl. Así es.

Los Ahuileros

Don Jairo's discourse on the church's antiquity ends in an affirmation on the importance of performance, in particular, of the *Ahuileros*, a performance found all over the region, which is connected with the celebration of Carnival. Writing of the *pueblos viejos* of Guerrero (Ixcateopan, Coatepec Costales and Acapetlahuaya), Gerardo Sámano cites the presence of a group of men called *huehues*, or *viejitos*, who dance and sing during the week preceding Lent. They are also called the *Ahuileros*, a term taken from the Nahuatl word *auilueue*, meaning "old libertines" (1994: 29). According to other sources, the original word was "*ahuile*," meaning "carnival," which later came to be pronounced "*agüile*" and confused with *águila*, and thus linked with Cuauhtémoc (Olivera 1980: 36) Sámano reports that in Coatepec Costales, the participants run through the streets and sing, "Now is the Sunday of *auili*." They pass by each house and ask its inhabitants to contribute an offering of food, flowers, and drink (see the description of the *güentle* and the dance of the *viejitos* in Ixcateopan de la Montaña, below). In Acapetlahuaya, the *huehues* sing fable-songs, in which animals are the protagonists. On the last day of the celebration, the participants gather around a greased pole (*palo encebado*), and try to reach the top. In Ixcateopan, the dance has been lost, but it involved the *palo encebado*, and was presented as a form of veneration of Cuauhtémoc. Although Sámano does not mention Teloloapan, Carnival is still celebrated there by erecting a greased wooden pole with bread, fruit and candy in a basket at the top. Children compete to climb the greased pole and throw down the treats. According to Olivera, the original songs are still sung in Pipicantla and Pachivia, as well.

The Igualtecan historian Carranco claims that there were dances celebrating Cuauhtémoc performed in Ixcateopan on the 28th of February (or Carnival Tuesday). The dance revolved around the symbolic hanging of a man, who represented the "Descending

Eagle," and was called the dance of the "Ahuiles, Ahuileros or Chichimilcos." He adds that the dance should be revived "as a way of verifying our ideas of independence and liberty" (1961: 93). Olivera mentions that Carranco himself tried to implement the dance in secondary schools in Tepecoacuilco and Taxco, making more obvious references to Cuauhtémoc, but his efforts did not take root (1980: 36).[118]

Both Olivera and Sámano coincide in stating that the dance of the *Ahuileros* isn't really a dance, but a series of songs in Nahuatl that celebrate Carnival and are unrelated to Cuauhtémoc.[119] However, many local and regional historians dispute this, persisting in linking the two traditions (see Carranco 1967, Velasco 1994, Roldán 1980; see also Memije 1992, who not only links the Ahuileros to the Cuauhtémoc tradition, but practically all of the indigenous dances of Guerrero, particularly the Tecuanes, Tigres and Tlacololeros).

For Ixcateopenses, mestizos who "no longer" speak an indigenous language, the fact that the songs are in Nahuatl lends them authenticity. For non-native speakers, words

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[118] Carranco was one of the Ixcateopan tradition's most enthusiastic defenders; the objective all of his writings is the glorification of Guerrero's place in national history. In his work on Cuauhtémoc, he links the hero was Vicente Guerrero, arguing that not only Cuauhtémoc prefigure Guerrero, both being tireless defenders of the *patria*, but that the very descendents of Cuauhtémoc were the followers of Guerrero, *en las tierras del sur*. He also mentions that the *ceiba* tree upon which Cuauhtémoc was hung in 1525 was the same kind of tree upon which Iturbide displayed the new flag of Mexico in 1821 (1969: 92).

[119] Following is a sample of one of these songs, cited in Sámano (1994: 34). The English translation is mine.

Yaljua, jugüitla ti penzaruguaya azamoztiaziztiaya ilixexixtila poguali, pero dios tiatmaka kino licencia, tiague mauizika todavini ini martes agüili, teguante penzaruguaya atmo tiaziztiaya ilixexixtlapoguali pero todavía teguante tiague mauizika ini martes agüili, teguante tiague ketza para teguante temoguizke, teguante moguizke o teguante tlatlautizke.

Ayer, anteayer pensábamos que no llegaríamos a este día del carnaval, pero Dios nos dio licencia, vamos a divertirnos todavía en este Marte agüili, nosotros no pensábamos que llegaríamos en este día del carnaval, pero todavía nosotros vamos a parar el palo encebado para que nosotros mismos lo vamos a bajar, nosotros lo bajaremos o nosotros daremos las gracias.

Yesterday, the day before yesterday, we thought this carnival day would never arrive, but God granted us the ability to see this day, we are all going to have fun on this *agüili* Tuesday, we didn't think this carnival day would come, but we are going to stand up the greased pole so that we can take it down ourselves, we will take it down ourselves, or we will give thanks.

in Nahuatl (like the glyphs mentioned above) have the magical quality of a ritual language. Since few of the participants in the dance of the Ahuileros actually understand what the words mean, their content is able to free itself from its literal moorings, to be reinterpreted as local people see fit. The mere existence of the Nahuatl language in nearby towns, in some cases, is indexical proof enough of the authenticity of the remains.[120]

THE BATTLE OF THE BONES

> Cuauhtémoc is the *ejido* that confronts the *encomienda* or the *latifundio*, and for this, the *campesinos* love him,[121] he is the permanent protest against every injustice, and for this, the unjust hate him; he is pure patriotism, and for this, the merchants of patriotism detest him; he is a voice of alarm for the integrity of the *patria*, and for this, the enemies of Mexico denigrate him; he is a vertical wall confronting the foreigner, and for this, the servile tear him down, and the patriotic build him up (Mendoza 1951: 11).
>
> The manipulation of history, turning it into the cornerstone of national identity, has made inflamed patriots create symbols and values, inventing "historic" situations that at some point contradict the sources that support them, moving them away, therefore, from any semblance of reality. This same manipulation of history in dominant ideology has lead to the acceptance of these myths, and accusations of being bad patriots against those who would objectively approach true knowledge of the symbols and situations in question" (Olivera 1980: 8).

The Symbol of Cuauhtémoc

"Descending Eagle," "The Young Grandfather," "The Eagle of Dusk:" the figure of Cuauhtémoc is one of the key symbols in modern Mexican nationalism. Local and national historians alike often refer to him as the first "defender of the *patria*, even

[120] One of Fidel's uncles assured me that the remains were authentic because Ixcateopan was near Ixcatepec and Coatepec Costales, where they still speak Nahuatl.

[121] This could be translated as, "Cuauhtémoc is the small, communal property that confronts the large landholding," but the literal rendering is a bit less poetic.

though the Tenochtitlan for which Cuauhtémoc fought was hardly representative of the geographical region of New Spain; nor was his empire conceived of as a nation in the traditional sense of the word (Gabino 2005: 5).

The cult of national heroes, which included historical figures like Cuauhtémoc and Iturbide, sprang up during the second half of the nineteenth century, stemming from the nation's ambivalence about its place in the international community, and a fear of foreign threats, particularly the United States, which had invaded Mexico in 1847, annexing half of its national territory; and France, whose "intervention" in Mexico ended in 1867 with the execution of the Emperor Maximilian (García 1977: 15). In general, those thinkers who were instrumental in the construction of Mexico's nationalist discourse were divided into two camps: *hispanicistas* and *indigenistas*. At stake was the origin of the Mexican nation: did Mexico owe its essence to the great indigenous cultures that existed before the Conquest, or to its development as a colony of Spain? The romantic nationalism that characterized the indigenistas (many of whom were masons) manifested itself in an exaltation of Mexico's indigenous roots, particularly in terms of the "rescue" of the prehispanic past, including the Nahuatl language. Polemics arose over what were considered the more unsavory aspects of the Aztec culture, especially human sacrifice. Indigenous figures were represented in romantic literature and art (in a classical style). The nationalist hagiography was fueled by a new craze for collecting relics which had belonged to national heroes (ibid. 51).

Conflicts arose over which heroes should be considered more important. The controversy over whether to celebrate Mexican Independence on the 16th of September (honoring Hidalgo and the start of the war) or the 27th of September (honoring Iturbide and the consummation of the war) was one example. Another was the debate over whether to honor Cuitláhuac or Cuauhtémoc as the most important defender of the Aztecs

against foreign domination. Cuauhtémoc won, as is evidenced by the construction of a monument to him on the Paseo de Reforma in Mexico City. The monument was proposed by Vicente Riva Palacio, minister of development under Porfirio Díaz, and grandson of Vicente Guerrero.[122] (Riva Palacio also collaborated in the design of the "Aztec Palace," Mexico's contribution to the World's Fair in Paris in 1889.) There was some discussion over the date of the monument's inauguration: August 21st, to commemorate his torture at the hands of Cortés; or September 16th, because like Hidalgo, Cuauhtémoc defended Mexican independence. The monument was inaugurated in August of 1887 (ibid. 27).[123] Another monument, a bust to Cuauhtémoc, had been inaugurated in 1869, and speeches to mark the event also linked the hero to Hidalgo (Tenenbaum 1994: 10).

In a discourse published on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the erection of the monument, D. Luís de la Brena wrote that since the time of Cuauhtémoc,

> …the indigenous race has suffered a retrograde modification. The actual state of our Indians is truly disheartening: fights, drunkenness, religious excess, these are their pleasures, fanatical, servile, brutish, hypocritical and abject, their individuality forms a singular contrast with the hero whose glory belongs to a century, a race and a continent.
>
> Where are the causes that have debased the race? How is it that the virile and heroic intelligence has become clumsy, downtrodden and abject? How is it that we cannot believe that the Indian who walks our streets and markets belongs to the same race as Cabrera, "the Mexican Rafael," as Guerrero, the indomitable soldier of liberty, as Juárez, the august personification of reform, and as Altamirano, the wise teacher of university cátedra and tribune? How is it that we, that call ourselves patriots, have converted the glorious memories of 1521 into a ludic and clumsy madness, allowing around the monument the performance of

[122] It is said that the main plaza in Ixcateopan was the Plaza Riva Palacio before it was rechristened in honor of Eulalia Guzmán.

[123] Other figures commemorated on the Paseo de la Reforma included, in order, Columbus, Hidalgo, Juárez and Zaragoza (who had lead the Mexican forces against the French). The Paseo ended at Chapultepec, where Porfirio Díaz had his official residence. This layout was designed in order to symbolically legitimate Díaz's rule (Tenenbaum 1994: 23).

> ridiculous dances that are nothing but an unhappy parody of Carnival and Holy Week? (García 1977: 107)

The author goes on to blame both the Spanish conquerors and his contemporaries for not trying hard enough to bring the descendents of indigenous heroes into the fold of modern civilization and development, a task which the twentieth-century *indigenistas* would take up. In 1910, Porfirio Díaz also re-inaugurated the National Museum of Archaeology, History and Ethnology, which would later become the National Museum of Anthropology and History—a museum dedicated to the glorification of Mexico's indigenous past. "The National Museum efficiently contributed to a double ideological process: the secular sacralization of the *historia patria* and, above all, the re-foundation of the national identity through the recuperation of the prehispanic past, together with the war of independence" (Morales 1994: 41; see also Alonso 2004).

As Lomnitz writes, the general problem with the *pensadores* is that "the characterizations of 'Mexican national culture' which the pensadores have developed are connected only very loosely (or vaguely) to the social groups that occupy the national space" (1992: 260). As evidenced by the importance of Cuauhtémoc, these nationalist myths create a selective vision of the prehispanic past, particularly emphasizing the Nahuatl-speaking groups of the central valleys and excluding the other fifty-odd indigenous groups that continue to exist in Mexico. As Gutiérrez writes,

> These selective motifs and narratives endorse only the history and ethnicity of the dominant mestizo majority of the population. Therefore, a process of cultural exclusion subdues the ethnic character of indigenous groups – for example the Maya in Yucatán; the cultures along the Gulf coast such as the Totonac; the Purépecha in the west; and the Mixtec and Zapotec in the south – whose own concepts of origin and descent, a centripetal force in locating ethnic identity, are eliminated from the nationalist agenda (1999: 4).

The "discovery" of the remains in the mid-twentieth century occurred in the midst of a resurgence in the conflicts between hispanicists and indigenists after the Mexican

Revolution—a conflict which cannot be reduced to ideology, as it also expressed a new series of anxieties about Mexico's political, economic and social positioning, particularly in relation to the United States (Moreno 1980: 26). The post-revolutionary Mexican government, like that of the post-Independence government, needed symbols that would define the re-born nation. In this context, the famous muralists—a group which included Rivera, Orozco, Tamayo and Siquieros—began to paint large-scale images of Mexican history and culture, exalting the figure of the Indian. The artistic movement was paralleled in literature. The institutionalized revolution was consolidated in politics when populist President Lázaro Cárdenas nationalized México's natural resources, including its oil reserve, and expropriated foreign holdings in the country, during his 1934-1940 term.[124]

However, Cárdenas was the last president of the Revolution; successive leaders moved away from liberal and revolutionary ideology, forming new economic and social policies which favored modernization and greater insertion into international markets. Between 1944 and 1949, as a result of World War II, American markets were closed to all of Latin America, causing a major financial crisis in Mexico. Latin America united against what was perceived as "Yankee imperialism," strengthening both *indigenismo* and *hispanismo*, which became a pan-Latin American ideology stressing its Spanish heritage. The Mexican government began to support industrialization and internal production, so that the country would not be so dependent on foreign goods.

But following the devaluation of the peso in 1948-1949, foreign investment in Mexico skyrocketed. President Miguel Alemán (1946-1952) instituted a series of pro-U.S. measures, including strategies favoring U.S. participation in Mexico and anti-

[124] See Schmidt (1978) for a discussion on nationalist thought during this period.

communist tactics which excluded the left from political participation. New economic policies increased the gap between rich and poor, and it became clear that the Mexican government was moving farther and farther away from the ideals of the Revolution. Recognizing the growing social unrest his economic policies were causing, President Alemán minted new five-peso coins which were stamped with the image of Cuauhtémoc, as a means of appeasing those critics of his government who accused him of being a *malinchista*.

On the other hand, the remains of the conquistador Hernán Cortés had been rediscovered in 1946; their whereabouts had been unknown since they had been removed from their niche in the Hospital de Jesús in the City of Mexico following the war for Independence (hispanicist *pensadores* feared that the tomb of Cortés would be despoiled by fervent patriots of the new nation).[125] The time was ripe for the appearance of Ixcateopan on the national stage and the discovery of the remains "purest hero in history" (Moreno 1980: 12).

The "Discovery"

> Then, someone comes to ask the priest, David Salgado Estrada, permission to consult the ecclesiastical archive. Because of this, a polemic emerges. In the heat of an argument, my father lets his tongue slip, and tells the priest David Salgado Estrada, "Look, David. If I am interested in this, it is because underneath the main altar of the church, there is one of the nation's greatest treasures. That is where Cuauhtémoc is buried." This took place during an argument in the curate's house, on the 30th of January of 1949. My father leaves the curate's house, goes home, takes one of the documents, returns, and shows it to Father David. This priest gets so excited, that a secret that the family had kept for four hundred and twenty years, this man can't keep five days. Because the 2nd of February, during his Candlemass sermon, at seven o'clock at night, instead of relating his talk to liturgy, or the gospels, or something Catholic, he goes up to the pulpit, and the only thing he says is, "we are in the presence of the venerated tomb of the last

[125] See Trouillot (1996: 179) for a discussion of the controversy surrounding the remains of Columbus.

Aztec king. There, beneath the main altar, Cuauhtémoc is buried." That was the whole sermon. The mass is over, and he leaves.

As is natural, the people began to talk. This comes to the ears of the municipal authority, who, on February 3rd, goes to the curate's house to accuse him formally because of what he said. This priest saw that he had a problem, he gets scared and blames Don Salvador Rodríguez. They are able to find my father on February 4th. They make him sign papers in which he promises to show all of the documentation we have so that it could be studied by scientists, who would transmit the oral tradition so that investigators would be aware of it. With these papers, the Governor, General Baltazar Leyva Mancilla alerts the señor President of the Republic, Licenciado Miguel Alemán Valdéz; the Licenciado Miguel Alemán Valdéz alerts the Secretary of Public Education [SEP], and the Secretary of Public Education, by way of one of its branches, the National Institute of Anthropology and History [INAH] commissions the professor Eulalia Guzmán to come here and study this documentation, with an official document that says "Señorita Profesora Eulalia Guzmán is authorized to investigate and verify if the documentation said to be in the possession of Salvador Rodríguez Juárez, relating to the tomb of Cuauhtémoc, dates to the sixteenth century. Signed, Licenciado Anthropologist Alfonso Caso" (Don Jairo, Ixcateopan 2000).[126]

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[126] Entonces, entrevista al presbítero David Salgado Estrada, pidiendole permiso para consultar el archivo eclisiatico. A consecuencia de ello, surgió una polémica, que en lo más duro y lo más fuerte de la polémica donde estaba la discusión (?), se va de la lengua mi padre y le dice al presbítero David Salgado Estrada, ¨Mira, David. Si a mí me interesa saber esto, es porque aquí bajo el altar mayor de la iglesia, hay un tesoro muy grande de la nación, está sepultado Cuauhtemoc.¨ Entonces el presbítero (?) Este sucede el 30 de enero de 1949. Entonces, esa discusión era en el, en la casa cural. Se sale mi padre de la casa cural, se va a la casa, toma uno de los documentos, regresa, y se lo muestra al padre David. Se emociona a tal grado este señor sacerdote, que un secreto que una familia lo guarda cuatrocientos veinte años, este señor no pudo guardarlo cinco días, porque el 2 de febrero, en el sermón de la misa de la Candelaria, de las 7 de la noche, en lugar de hablar relacionado a lo que es la liturgia o a que el el evangelio, o lo que es la cosa católica, se sube al pulpito y lo único que le dice el señor es que estamos ante la tumba venerada del último rey de los Aztecas. Allí bajo el altar mayor está sepultado Cuauhtemoc. Ese fue todo el sermón, termina la misa, se va (?) La gente, como es natural, sale comentando, llega esto a los oídos de la autoridad municipal, y, la autoridad municipal en pleno el día 3 de febrero, se (?) a la casa cural a levantarle actos por lo que había dicho. Este señor cura se vió que se había metido en un problema, se espantó y ya le hecha la culpa a don Salvador Rodríguez. Logran localizar a mi padre el 4 de febrero. En que le levantan actas en las que él se compromete a mostrar toda esa documentación que tenemos para que sea estudiado por los científicos y transmite toda esa tradición oral para que la conocieran los (?) personas que fuera necesario o las que mandaran a investigar. Con esta acta, se da inicio el gobernador del estado el señor general Baltazar Leyva Mancilla, el señor gobernador da aviso al señor presidente de la república Licenciado Miguel Alemán Valdez, el Licenciado Miguel Alemán Valdez da aviso a la Secretaria de Educación Pública, y la Secretaria de Educación Pública por una de sus ramas, el Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, comisiona a la profesora Eulalia Guzmán para venir a este, a estudiar esta documentación, con un nombramiento que dice "Señorita Profesora Eulalia Guzmán (?) investigar y comprobar si la documentación que dice tener Salvador Rodríguez Juárez relacionada con la tumba de Cuauhtemoc, data del siglo 16. Firmando este documento por el (?) Licenciado Antropólogo, Alfonso Caso.

In February of 1949, Mexico City newspapers began to divulge the existence of documents relating to the burial of Cuauhtémoc in Ixcateopan, some journalists already referring to them as apocryphal. That same month, the INAH sent the historian Eulalia Guzmán to investigate the papers and the oral tradition of the town. After examining the documents, she concluded that they were false, but was later convinced that they were copies of original, authentic papers signed by Motolinía.

> She comes here, and my father shows her every courtesy. He shows her all of the documentation, he transmits to her the oral tradition. Then, after having studied [the documents], the professor makes up the idea that there was a tunnel between the Juárez house—a house stolen from us, stolen from my father, where the Museum of Indigenous Resistance is now—and the atrium of the church, and from the atrium to the main altar. Then my father looks at the drawing and says, "Look, you're lying. It's not you they're attacking, it's me they attack and call crazy. If you have permission from *Bienes Nacionales* to excavate there, do what you want. Because where you're marking the place the codex says the tunnel goes to [isn't my house, but] the tomb of Juan de Tecto. Finally, they started excavating, and at a depth of about a meter and twenty centimeters, they found the tomb of Juan de Tecto. They moved these rocks, and, embarrassed, kept excavating [….] but they never found the tunnel (ibid.).[127]

In March, another group of academics (the German Mexicanist Association) met to discuss the documents, declaring them a fraud. In response, Don Florencio (Don Jairo's grandfather) sent indignant letters to the national newspaper *Excelsior*, objecting

[127] Se presenta aquí, mi padre le da todas las facilidades, le muestra toda la documentación, le trasmite toda la tradición oral. Entonces, después de haber estudiado, la profesora inventa que de la casa Juárez, una casa que nos robaron, que le robaron a mi padre, donde está el...Museo de la Resistencia Indígenista, venía un túnel aquí al atrio y del atrio entraba al altar mayor. Entonces ve mi padre el dibujo y le dice, "Mire, (?) su mentira, Compatraña, porque no es a ti a la que te están atacando. Al que dan de loco y al que atacan es a mí. Entonces, tú lo que quieres es comprobar si aquí está la tumba de Fray Juan de Tecto. Si tienes permisio de Bienes Nacionales excavar allá, háganos (?)enojar, haz lo que tú quieres. Porque a donde estás marcando tú el lugar, estás marcando donde llega el túnel, es a donde está marcado en el códice que está la tumba de Fray Juan de Tecto. Total se pusieron a excavar como al metro veinte centimetros, encontraron la tumba de Fray Juan de Tecto (me: "um hmmm."). Recogieron esa losamienta, y de vergüenza siguieron excavando; ya dejaron a excavar ya que era una cantidad (de agua) y hubo necesidad de tapar ese pozo. Jamás encontraron el túnel.

to the attack on the veracity of the documents in his possession. Finally, in September, the excavations began in the church and the *momostle*.

After visiting the excavation site, Baltasar R. Leyva, then Governor of Guerrero, declared his intentions to financially support the local school, improve the electrical service, and build a paved highway to Ixcateopan, "since it now has historical importance, as the tomb of Cuauhtémoc" (Moreno 1980: 87). During the excavation, the investigators uncovered human remains and other prehispanic objects—discoveries eagerly reported by the national press. Finally, on the 27th of September, the archaeologists found the remains of Cuauhtémoc.

> Monday the 26th, the hole was dug another 25 centimeters, and when same site was reached, the zone of clay again was arrived at again; at the first tap of the hammer, it sunk into the clay and hit a layer of stone, different from the slate of the region, which covered the mouth of a pit, dug into the living rock. So, the indigenous diggers opened up, in the rocky terrain, a square well, approximately half a meter wide and 55 centimeters deep. They began to excavate the pit, which was separated by the well by the above-mentioned layer of stone. Lifting this up, an oval copper plaque appeared, sloped toward the East, half-buried in carbonate earth, formed in large part by calcinated bone, earth which filled large part of the pit; the top surface of the oval was a slate gray, the bottom surface a living red; when we lifted by plaque out, we were able to distinguish on the grey surface a cross and at the foot of it the inscription 1,525 1,529, Rey, é, S, Coatemo. Beneath the oval, traversed from N.E. to S.W. was a copper spear-point, the same brilliant red color, with stains, which rested on top of some fragments of human skull placed in the form of a box, in which were found beads, rings, and other objects. These bones and a few fragments of rib, all burned, rested on top of the carbonate earth mentioned above; the other bones were covered by [the box], some completely calcinated, some halfway, and almost all in pieces. As all of this material was removed, it was inventoried, with the exception of the bones [in a note, Guzmán explains that the INAH had refused at that time to send a physical anthropologist]; beneath, in the bottom of the pit, a rectangular copper plaque appeared, the same brilliant red, with oxidation stains similar to those covering the other pieces of metal.
>
> Once emptied, the pit was seen to form a square pyramid shape, shortened and inverted, covered on three of its four faces by a covering of blackish clay, like carbon; the fourth (to the east) is formed by a natural stratum of slate. It measured

> 32 by 40 centimeters at the mouth, by 40 centimeters deep and approximately 20 by 20 centimeters wide (Guzmán, in Pérez and Guzmán et. al. 1951: 37-38).

Two copper plaques, one inscribed with "1521 1525 Rey é S. Coatemo;" small offerings, a partial skull and bone fragments. These (the bones arranged in anatomical form) are now under glass in front of the altar of the ex-parish of the Virgin de la Asunción, and have become the focus of pilgrimages, national and international, as well as the center of a firestorm of controversy.

> And from that moment, the professor Eulalia Guzmán—excuse me since she is dead, but I told her many times to her face—called herself "discoverer" of something she didn't discover. Because the commission she was given to come and investigate already mentioned the tomb of Cuauhtémoc, which means, it had already been found, they it was known where it was. So she was asked to verify whether or not the documentation was true or false. So we were doing her a favor when we named her the "exhumator" of the remains of Cuauhtémoc, but never the discoverer. At any rate, it is a favorite Mexican saying: "One person runs like a hare, but never catches anything, while another reaches his goal without even running." The case of Cuauhtémoc (Don Jairo, Ixcateopan 2000).[128]

The news did not take long to spread all over the country, and tourists and dignitaries immediately began to arrive in Ixcateopan, the Governor having kept his promise to improve the highway. In the days surrounding the *Día de la Raza*, seven thousand tourists made the pilgrimage to Ixcateopan, whose name was officially changed to "Ixcateopan de Cuauhtémoc," and the first of several monuments was erected in the town plaza. State power was symbolically moved to Ixcateopan for the day. Soon after, the director of the Military College stated that he wanted the remains moved to Mexico City, the city which Cuauhtémoc defended" (ibid. 13), but Governor Leyva refused his

[128] Y desde ese momento, la profesora Eulalia Guzmán, que me disculpen ya se murió, pero muchas veces se lo dije a ella mera, se autonombra descubridora de algo que no descubrió. (me: "ahhh.") Porque el nobramiento que le dan para venir a investigar está hablando de una tumba de Cuauhtemoc, quiere decir que el lugar está localizado, que se sabía donde. Entonces, a ella comprobarse esa documentación era verídica, era auténtica o era mentira, una rana. Entonces, a ella, haciéndole un gran favor, pues la nombraríamos exhumadora de los restos de Cuauhtemoc, pero nunca la descubridora. (me: "umm hmm.") Sin embargo, esa es nuestra lema de los mexicanos, que uno corre la liebre y el otro sin correr (alcanza?) En (?) lo más interesante con relación al caso de Ixcateopan. (me: "umm hmmm.") El caso de Cuautemoc.

request. A project was drawn up to create a monument using earth from all the indigenous regions of Mexico, but it was never realized. Diego Rivera traveled to Ixcateopan, after proposing a new painting of Cuauhtémoc, using his bones as a model. Schools and streets were renamed all over the country. Eulalia Guzmán was honored by receiving an honorary doctorate from the UNAM, the medal of Civic Merit, the Medal of Cuauhtémoc, and being named "Favorite Daughter of Guerrero." 1950 was declared "The Year of Cuauhtémoc," and even London's BBC presented a program on the Mexican hero.

The "discovery" coincided with the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Guerrero's constitution as a state. The government published a commemorative magazine, whose first page pays homage to Cuauhtémoc,[129] Guerrero's most important native son. Also included were articles about Vicente Guerrero, the Abrazo of Acatempan, the Plan of Iguala, Juan Álvarez, Ignacio M. Altamirano, and other famous people and events from Guerrero (Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero 1999). In the (then) municipal palace of Chilpancingo, murals were commissioned to celebrate Guerrero's role in the establishment of the Mexican nation as well as a vision of its modernization and incorporation into the national economy (thanks to industry, education and tourism—typical themes of development in the 1950's). Although the mural depicts Vicente Guerrero, Pedro Ascencio and other heroes, the main figure is that of Cuauhtémoc. The mural begins with a representation of the birth of Cuauhtémoc, created with the breath of Ehécatl, the god of wind. It continues with depictions of his presentation as a small child, his bravery in war, his meeting with the conquerors, the burning of his feet by Cortés, his

[129] The author of the article on Cuauhtémoc writes that he had become aware of the existence of the remains some time before the official "discovery" (Salmerón 1949: 2). His is not the only account of advance information: Andrés López Velasco, the *cronista* of Iguala, claims to have been one of the first people to know about the remains outside of Ixcateopan (1994: 20).

martyrdom in Acalán and the return of his remains to Ixcateopan. The center of the entire mural is a triumphant Cuauhtémoc, arising amidst flames from the back of a giant eagle. This is the image that directly faces the entrance to the building, which now houses the Regional Museum of Guerrero (see Pavía Miller 1996).

In October, critics began to publish their doubts, despite a local rumor stating that unbelievers would be struck dead (ibid. 95). Diego Rivera warned, "If tomorrow the *campesinos*, sublime Indians that guard the remains of the chief of their town, rifles in hand, take the naysayers and, forcing them up against a wall in Teloloapan, shoot them, they will have done a deed of absolute patriotic and historic justice" (ibid. 135). Personal attacks flew on both sides: some argued that Eulalia Guzmán's work would be more scientific if she were a man (at the same time that cartoons portrayed her as "mannish"), while others accused Eulalia Guzmán of being a communist. Throughout the controversy, homages to Cuauhtémoc continued to be celebrated by students, labor unions, and political parties.

In 1952, labor union leader and presidential candidate Vicente Lombardo Toledano began his campaign in Ixcateopan, with a speech invoking the memory of the last Aztec emperor, declaiming, "Father Cuauhtémoc, you left us with the legacy, with your actions and your sacrifice, of the eternal mandate to defend Mexico against its foreign oppression. I promise you, in the name of the Popular Party and my own, to be a faithful interpreter of that legacy" (Carr 1994: 347). Barry Carr adds, "Lombardo was not alone in this political reading of Cuauhtémoc. David Siqueiros (still a member of the PCM) wrote in 1951, 'I see in Cuauhtémoc a prototype of Mao Tse-Tung…the leaders of the Viet Minh, and the fighters for the nationalization of Iran's oil'" (347).

While the members of these commissions continued to debate the authenticity of the remains on scientific grounds, other cast the controversy in terms of "emotion" versus

"science." History seemed to be an ambivalent discipline, sometimes falling in the emotional, sometimes the scientific camp.[130] In 1950, in response to the controversy, one writer quoted Ignacio Manuel Altamirano:

> "History has ceded to science evidence and proof. She, a beautiful woman, only uses facts when they are within her reach; but she gets to the truth by way of sentiment, always utilizing good sense and a sense of art. A woman after all, she knows it is very difficult to prove and demonstrate the evidence, even for things that happened yesterday; but art has the ultimate resources: the resources of sentiment which are eternal and can be used at any moment. What science does is the work of the mind: reason. What history does is the work of the spirit: the light of conscience" (García Quintana 1977: 102).

Another reporter raised the question, "which is better: a cold, indifferent truth or a lie…full of stimulating, strong passion" (ibid. 15)? On the first anniversary of the "discovery," one author concludes that, "despite the negative conclusions, despite the scientific honorability of its authors, those who know the mechanisms of myth are not convinced, nor will they ever be. Against myth, if history is powerless, science is even more so" (ibid. 197). Others attacked the romanticism of the indigenistas. On October 16th, 1949, Ramiro De la Garza published an editorial in *Excelsior* entitled "The Two Cuauhtémocs:"

> Cuauhtémoc is the first myth of the badly named official Mexican history, inspired by North American poinsettism, which has successfully fought so that we would forget our glorious Spanish tradition, and exclusively embrace the Aztec tradition: a Hollywoodesque, Diegoriveresque, total false *aztequismo*.
>
> As a geographic expression, modern Mexico did not exist, and so Cuauhtémoc could not have defended it…Cuauhtémoc also could not have defended our

[130] Benjamin Keen argues that the indigenistas could be divided into three categories. First, the scientific indigenistas, including "the great majority of Mexican anthropologists and other social scientists interested in Indian questions," which are here represented by members of the INAH commissions. The second category is "represented by Eulalia Guzmán and her disciples, is violently anti-Spanish and idealizes Aztec Mexico beyond recognition." Keen identifies the third category with French arqueologist Laurette Séjourné, who found the true spiritual roots of prehispanic Mexico in the culture of Teotihuacan. Her Jungian-inspired mysticism can be compared with some ideas espoused by the pan-indian and neo-indigenist movements analyzed below (1971).

> language, which he did not speak, nor our customs, which he did not know. He did not even suspect the existence of the race that today forms the largest part of our nation, the mestizos and creoles. Not having defended our territory, nor our language, nor our religion, nor our customs, nor our race, how did he become defender of the *Patria*? Of what *Patria*? (Moreno 1980: 22).

The Commissions

A first commission named in 1949 by the Secretary of Public Education (financed by the Bank of Mexico) to scientifically examine all the evidence discovered in Ixcateopan came to the official conclusion that the remains were not in fact those of Cuauhtémoc, although not all of its members agreed. Eulalia Guzmán and Dr. Antonio Quiróz, for example, continued to insist that the remains were authentic; Dr. Quiroz claimed, for example, that one of the bones was of a foot which showed burn marks: a sign of Cuauhtémoc's torture at the hands of Cortés. A second commission was named in 1950, and came to the conclusion that neither the documents, nor the objects found in the burial site were from the sixteenth century, and therefore, could not be associated with Cuauhtémoc. As was to be expected, many interested parties did not accept the commission's findings. The State Committee for the Alliance of Indigenous Communities of the State of Guerrero, "speaking in the name of the seven million indigenous people of the country" proclaimed that "it seems that strong political or caste interests, or other hidden hands, have moved to frustrate or opaque such a grand discovery" (Roldán 1980: 315). The findings of the commission, however, were left open for the possibility of new investigations (Olivera 1999: 190).

In 1976, taking advantage of the loophole in the most recent commission's findings, the government of Guerrero asked the federal government (under the presidency of Luís Echeverría) to create another commission which would realize new studies and emit a final judgment on the authenticity of Cuauhtémoc's remains. The inhabitants of

Ixcateopan agreed: "now we are only waiting for the members of the INAH to arrive, so that they call tell us once and for all that the bones of Cuauhtémoc are here!" (Matos 2006: 58). This interdisciplinary team of investigators would carry out the most complete and "scientific" research into the matter, and would try and lay to rest "the battle of the bones." Social anthropologists would examine the emergence of Cuauhtémoc as a national hero in the nineteenth century, review the newspaper articles published around the time of the "discovery" in 1949, and study the oral tradition in Ixcateopan and northern Guerrero, the southern part of the state of Mexico, and the region of Tabasco where Cuauhtémoc is believed to have been killed. An ethnohistorian and native speaker of Nahuatl would re-examine the Juárez documents. A scholar of colonial architecture would undertake a study of the church, and an archeologist would re-examine the excavation sites under the altar and at the *momoxtle*. A chemist would examine the copper plaque, and forensic anthropologists would study the bones.[131]

The social anthropologists came to the following conclusions: first, the entire controversy had been manipulated by political and economic interest from the end of the nineteenth century through the years of the discovery and ensuing polemic. The notebooks containing the tradition were written by Don Florentino Juárez in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Juárez family were local *caciques* who abused their authority with impunity, conspiring with other well-known families like the Jaimes in the creation of the local tradition as a means to achieve their own economic goals and restore political power to Ixcateopan, which had recently lost part of its territory to the newly created municipio of Ixcapuzalco (García 1977, Moreno 1980). Second, the oral tradition was an amalgam of three separate traditions. The first revolved around a general belief

[131] See Briggs (1996) on the sources of discursive authority.

that something important, or someone important, had been buried in the church. The second, and most generalized, was the Juárez tradition, which only became widespread after the events of 1949, and the third was the belief, common in the region, that Cuauhtémoc was of Chontal origin. The team studied a fourth tradition from Tabasco, which revolved around the belief that the remains of the hero were to be found near where he had been killed, in the Usumacinta region. Andrea Oliveira distinguished between the Ixcateopan and Tabasco traditions in the following manner,

> Here we see clearly the basic difference between the tradition of Ichcateopan and that of…Usumacinta. The first was manipulated by a group of people with strong political and economic interests and has had a tireless supporter, Don Salvador Rodríguez, who has resorted to almost superhuman resources to conserve it, to enrich it and to sustain it. On the other hand, the tradition of Tabasco forms part of other local traditions, without a more specific interest in maintaining it or manipulating it with personal objectives" (1980: 46).

The documents, including signatures, were all determined to be apocryphal. The study of the church, now using more advanced technology, resulted in the conclusion that the first church built in Ixcateopan, possibly in the first half of the sixteenth century, had been located near some prehispanic constructions in the cemetery. The church of La Asunción was begun in 1550, at the earliest, and its main arch in 1570. The principal façade was finished in 1659, and was modified several times in later centuries. The date of 1539, inscribed on the main arch, is a falsification, since there are no other similar inscriptions on other churches of that time, and the writing style does not match that of the sixteenth century.

Prefacing his report on the findings of the archeological investigation, Eduardo Matos Moctezuma wrote, "as men of science, as investigators, we concentrate on the search for the truth, and we do not accept pressure of any kind, neither political, nor emotional, which would result in the least change in the result of our investigations"

(1980: 9). After criticizing the unscientific methodology of the archeology involved in the first commissions' studies, Matos described his conclusions. First, the part of the ruins that correspond to the last stage of prehispanic occupation (1450-1521) was so destroyed that little or nothing could be inferred from them. Second, with the exception of a small amount of ceramics, there were no indications relating the population of Ichcateopan to the population of Mexico-Tenochtitlán. Third, the cultural development of Ixcateopan was very low. It had a subject population of only about five hundred people. Fourth, the only intact constructions dated from 1350-1450, and had been used a ceremonial-administrative center. It was unlikely to have ever been a "palace." Finally, no treasure (jade, gold, etc.) was found (ibid.).

The forensic studies revealed the following: the bone fragments belong to eight individuals, who come from different time periods, and demonstrate distinct burial methods; and the partial skull could not have been buried in 1529, and belonged to an adult mestiza woman. According to the chemical studies realized on the copper plaque, the plaque itself could have been manufactured in the sixteenth century, but the writing itself was recent. The final *dictamen* stated,

> There is no scientific base to support the affirmation that the remains found the 26th of September of 1949 in the church of Santa María de la Asunción, Ichcateopan, Guerrero, are those of Cuauhtémoc, the last lord of the Mexicas and heroic defender of Mexico-Tenochtitlan (Matos 1980: 41).[132]

[132] The official report has had limited success in silencing those who would support the Ixcateopan tradition. The "Find a Grave" site on the World Wide Web lists "The Church of the Remains of Cuauhtémoc" in Ixcateopan, Guerrero as the last Aztec emperor's final resting place (www.findagrave.com).

THE DEBATE CONTINUES

Voces de la Ciudad, Again

A few weeks before the Festival of Cuauhtémoc in February of 2000, I spoke to Teloloapense historian Jesús Guzmán about the polemic surrounding Cuauhtémoc. During our discussion, he argued that there is a difference between "authentic" and "inauthentic" uses of history. Unlike the members of the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Ixcateopenses do not use history in an authentic way, nor do they base their discourse on authentic history. They are much more interested in personal gain than collective action. Continuing with his musings on Chiapas, he remarked that Cuauhtémoc is not a particularly important figure among Mayan-speaking groups (despite the oral tradition about his remains in Tabasco). The Mayans have their own indigenous heroes. They may read about Cuauhtémoc in nationally-produced history books, but they do not regard him as one of their own. Jesús' wife is a native Mayan speaker, and he lived and worked for several years in the region.

Jesús then mentioned that he had been asked to give a conference during the celebrations in Ixcateopan, but that he would only speak "if they would let him say what he wanted to," so the organizers had decided that it would be best for him not to be involved. The director of the local television station passed by as we were talking and, inspired by our conversation, asked Jesús if he would like to participate in a television program about the polemic. After thinking of several titles ("Truth or Lies" was one), they decided on "The Remains of Cuauhtémoc: Between Science and the Manipulation of History."

The program was aired soon after, and basically consisted of Jesús talking about the controversy and listing the proofs that contradict the possibility that the remains are those of Cuauhtémoc. After discussing the polemic, Jesús refuted the tradition of

Ixcateopan much along the lines of the INAH commission and other "scientific" historians. He concluded that, although he didn't believe the remains were authentic, he did feel that it was very important to celebrate the transcendence of Cuauhtémoc as a basis for nationalism, adding that there are five important heroes for Guerrerenses: Cuauhtémoc, Hidalgo, Morelos, Guerrero, and Zapata.

The interviewer also commented on the Abrazo de Acatempan as a historical polemic. Jesús said, "just so they don't claim I'm against everything," that there is evidence that it took place on March 14th, according to one of Guerrero's letters and the report of a *realista* spy. They met in Teloloapan, and then proceeded to Acatempan. He feels that Guerrero hasn't gotten the respect he deserves, and that it was he who was interested in forming a peace among Mexicans. Iturbide, rather than calling the shots, followed Guerrero. According to Jesús, we only remember Guerrero for "*mi patria es primero*," when he should also remember the good he did as President of the Republic. He says it's a shame that the state escudo doesn't have any reference to Guerrero, although the state was named after him. Its symbolism is entirely prehispanic.

After a series of questions called in to the television station about other topics of local history (the relative antiquity of Teloloapan and Alahuixtlán, the origins of the *colonia* Mexicapán and others), Manuel, the interviewer closed by saying that we should all draw our own conclusions, and that it is important to know the facts of history and not to be mislead by historical fantasies. But he then says that in history, "nothing is true, nothing is a lie."

The program became a hot topic among Teloloapenses during the following weeks, so a short time later, a second show was aired. This time the guest speaker was Professor Waldo Ojeda Sánchez, a respected professor, who had at one time been active in local politics. He introduced himself as is an indigenous man, whose mother tongue is

Nahuatl, "the language of Cuauhtémoc." He started by saying that "a people without a history is like a tree without roots." He says that October 12th, 1492, the Día de la Raza, was the day that the indigenous people began to disappear. In Guerrero, there are 4 indigenous groups: the Nahuatl, Mixteco, Amuzgo, and Tlapaneco. And in Chiapas, and in the mountains of Guerrero, the army is still abusing the indigenous people. He talked about the *dos corrientes en México*: the mexicanistas and the hispanistas. The official current, and that of most historians, is hispanismo, which "goes against everything that Cuauhtémoc did," linking hispanista historiography to the controversy over Acatempan, where officials don't recognize that the Abrazo took place on January 10th, because Acatempan was once an indigenous community.

After this introduction, he justified his presence on the show, stating that he had been personally involved in the events of 1949, having been invited by Leopoldo Carranco in September of that year to go to Ixcateopan and translate a Nahuatl song, "*la canción de los Ahuiles*" (see above) which tells of the forty-day journey taken with the cadaver of Cuauhtémoc to Ixcateopan. Ojeda continued by reciting the history of Cuauhtémoc according to the tradition of Ixcateopan, adding an interpretation of the song of the Ahuiles, or Ahuileros, which essentially says, "we have come to tell you that our King and Lord Cuauhtémoc is coming." Red flags displayed by each pueblo were signals for the pilgrims. "We the Indians are sure that they are the remains. We are sure because we are Mexicans, we are Guerrerenses," adding that the government's acceptance of the bones is more evidence for their authenticity.

Manuel then showed a clip from the talk with Jesús Guzmán and asked the professor to give a response. Professor Ojeda replied that "Yes, they are the authentic remains of Cuauhtémoc," saying that he had been a friend of Salvador Rodríguez, and

had seen the documents bearing Motolinía's signature "with his own eyes." Manuel concluded that Professor Ojeda had presented "an interesting point of view."

For some time, Teloloapenses continued to talk about the polemic, most of them agreeing with Professor Ojeda. One man remarked that the professor must be right, because he speaks Nahuatl, unlike Jesús Guzmán. The following week, a local paper printed a brief column by Ojeda, repeating that the remains in Ixcateopan were indeed authentic, and that, unfortunately, Jesús Guzmán paid too much attention to the history written by the winners, who can't be trusted. He ended the column with a reference to a mestizo who told him that his indigenous mother was raped by his Spanish father (during the Conquest, not this immediate generation), and that he therefore doesn't have European blood by choice. A friend who at that time taught English in the high school in Ixcateopan mentioned to me that someone from Ixcateopan had seen Guzmán's talk on television, and that a group of Ixcateopenses became upset and wanted to come and rebut his arguments.

The INAH, Still

The last INAH commission presented the final report on their findings in 1976, but the Institute has not been able to "close the book" for good, due to continued public interest in the case. New books and articles rehashing the story are published every few years. Alicia Olivera published one narrative of her experiences in 1999; and in 2006, Eduardo Matos published a recounting of the presentation of the report to the President of the Republic in an issue of *Arqueología Mexicana* dedicated to the state of Guerrero, arguing that the 1976 Commission had been convened only because the then Governor of Guerrero was interested in opening a trucking route through Ixcateopan (2006: 61). Both authors reiterate their position as scientists, who as members of the commission were

forced to combat both anti-scientific history and the imposition of political and economic interests.

In June of 2007, I attended the presentation of a new book by ethnohistorian Alfredo Ramírez on the codex of Teloloapan, a sixteenth-century manuscript which presents in pictographic form a complaint by the *indígenas* of Teloloapan against the abuses of the local priest (Ramírez 2006). After the presentation, one member of the audience asked about the remains in Ixcateopan (a question which is almost *de rigueur* in Guerrero in any discussion about arqueology or ethnohistory). The panel discussants were wary as they replied that the case of Cuauhtémoc was a thorny one and that, while there were discrepancies over the authenticity of the remains, the local tradition was a very important one. Blanca Jiménez, panel moderator, and Director of the INAH-Guerrero spoke about the remodelation of the church in which the remains were housed. She remarked that there had been interest in Ixcateopan in restoring the church, which was not in very good condition. Although few people are aware of this, she said, the INAH-Guerrero had stepped in a few years ago in order to restore the church, a landmark and shrine of local tradition. And as part of an interdisciplinary project on the history and anthropology of northern Guerrero, the INAH is currently sponsoring new excavations in Ixcateopan.

The Museum of Indigenous Resistance

According to Saturnino Abarca, the *encargado* in 2000, the Museum of Indigenous Resistance was created by the INAH in 1986 as an "alternative" to the church housing the remains of Cuauhtémoc. The museum is meant to be present a scientific way of looking at the past, and barely mentions Cuauhtémoc (one of the labels does mention that there is an oral tradition associated with Cuauhtémoc's remains in Ixcateopan). The

central exhibition revolves around a series of narratives by both indigenous and Spanish chroniclers detailing the various forms of indigenous resistance to the Conquest. Each chronicle is illustrated by an amate painting created by an artisan from Xalitla (a Nahuatl town located in the Balsas region of the state).

Noble scientific intentions aside, most view the museum as supporting the Cuauhtémoc tradition rather than providing an alternative to it. One of the speeches pronounced on the occasion of its inauguration, for example, was spoken both in Nahuatl and Spanish, and dedicated to the memory of the "*Joven Abuelo*" (Vidal 1987: 20-21). Despite the absence of Cuauhtémoc in the museography, even Saturnino talked about him quite a bit as he gave us a tour of the exhibits in the spring of 2000. He told us that, as a Guerrerense (he is from Taxco), he has a special feeling for Cuauhtémoc. For him, the death of the hero meant the death of centralized indigenous resistance. Contradicting official historiography, Saturnino told us that Cuauhtémoc had Yope ancestry through his father, and that the Yopes (an extinct indigenous group from the Coastal-Mountain region of the state; see below) were famous for their resistance, first to the Mexicas, and then to the Spaniards.

Unfortunately, the museum has experienced financial troubles. Both the municipio and the INAH share the responsibility for its upkeep, and there appears to be some conflict over which institution pays for which repairs. When the governor comes to the September commemoration, he sometimes gives a donation. At the time of this writing, the museum was undergoing a remodelation, "hopefully in time for the commemoration of the discovery of the remains in September" (Ocampo 2007). Ironically, the museum is located in the old Juárez house, which don Jairo is still trying to have returned to the family.

COMMEMORATIONS

Comparing the two commemorations, Don Jairo declares:

> In September it's just…look, I'm a tyrant when I talk, and what I say is true. I call a spade a spade (*a pana llamo pana*). In September, what they do is government propaganda. They come and boast about what they didn't do, that the highways are attractive…Because look, the government comes to do homage to the exhumation of the remains. A representative of the President of the Republic comes, the *señor* Governor comes, and two or three of those who have commercialized their traditions, their race, their, well, their way of dressing like the ancestors, that are always running after the government…five or six of those come, but they are commercialized. And on the 23rd of February, not just a thousand, a thousand five hundred dancers come…from all over the Republic. From the *concheros* and all…there are no less than five or six thousand people. The 26th of September, no more than five hundred come, because it's just the government and their hangers-on (*achichincles*). That's how it is (Don Jairo, Ixcateopan, 2000).[133]

September: The "Discovery"

There are two dates related to Cuauhtémoc commemorated in Ixcateopan: the 26th of September, which marks the date of the "discovery" of the remains, and the 23rd of February, which marks the anniversary of his birth. The September celebration, which often lasts several days, tends to be politically oriented, and generally boasts the presence of the governor of the state of Guerrero (or his representative) and representatives of the federal government. The bureaucrats honor Cuauhtémoc with a wreath of flowers on his

[133] En septiembre nada más es, mire, yo soy muy tirano para hablar, y digo lo que es verdad. A pana llamo pana... En septiembre lo que hacen es propaganda para el gobierno. Venir a presumir de lo que no hicieron, y que hicimos (?) las carreteras están bien bonitas, (?) Porque mire, vienen a rendir un homenaje el gobierno por, la exhumación de los restos. Viene el representante del Presidente de la República, viene el señor gobernador, y vienen dos, tres de los que han comercializado sus tradiciones, su raza, sus, este, pos, su forma de vestir de los antepasados que siempre andan atrás del gobierno, vienen aquí cinco, seis, gentes, pero estos son comercializados. Y el 23 de febrero no vienen, de mil a mil quinientos danzantes. De toda la república. Desde concheros, y de todo...vienen a rendir su homenaje, y, no menos de cinco, seis mil gentes, Cosa que el 26 de septiembre no llega más, de cinco mil, porque nada más vienen el gobierno y sus achichincles. Así es.

tomb, and a short cultural program takes place. In 2000, the program featured *bailables* (folkloric representations of regional dances) danced by local schoolchildren, speeches presented by local dignitaries, and entertainment provided by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Acapulco and the official Band of the Government of the State of Guerrero. The governor (René Juárez Cisneros at the time) did not arrive, although there were rumors that he would come by helicopter at the last minute.

The municipal president initiated the proceedings by welcoming locals, visitors and distinguished guests, and took advantage of the occasion to remind the Governor's representative of some of Ixcateopan's economic requirements. The representative responded with a short speech about the importance of Cuauhtémoc, which seemed to be an attempt to reconcile both local and "scientific" historiography: he first reminded the public that his remains had been discovered in Ixcateopan in 1949, but then claimed that he was the son of the Emperor Ahuizotl and a princess of Tlatelolco. He concluded his speech by proclaiming that the spirit of Cuauhtémoc lived on in René Juárez Cisneros, who would continue to serve Ixcateopan and Guerrero.[134]

The Philharmonic then gave a concert of music by Mexican classical composers with indigenous themes, then the DIF (Children's and Family Services, the branch of the municipal government traditionally presided over by the president's wife) invited those present to enjoy a taco as they walked around the plaza Eulalia Guzmán and looked at the sidewalk exhibition of crafts from nearby Acapetlahuaya, a municipio famous for its lacquered bowls.

Several Ixcateopenses expressed to me their opinion that the celebration in February was more exciting.

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[134] The symbolic identification of modern political figures with national heroes often plays a part in civic ritual; the most obvious example is the Grito of Independence.

In 2006, Governor Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo did make an appearance at the celebration (as he had at the previous *simulacro* of the Abrazo of Acatempan), choosing that date to inaugurate a newly paved highway from Pachivia to Ixcateopan. After negating that he had only attended because the actual municipal president was a member of his party (the PRD), declaring that "the fact that we are working together…is not a sign of partisan politics." He also revealed plans to create a tourist circuit that would include Acatempan, Ixcateopan, Taxco and Iguala, and would celebrate Guerrero's role in the consolidation of the *patria*.[135]

February: The Festival

Although the most important day of the February celebrations is the 23rd, activities actually begin several days before. The following description refers to the celebration of the fiesta in February of 2000.

In the plaza, local students had set up a small display of the events surrounding the discovery of the remains. It had photographs of the excavation, copies of newspaper articles, and copies of the scientific proofs of the remains' authenticity. On the 21st, members of the *Comité del Pueblo Unido* (the organizing commission) gave a presentation on indigenous curing methods. The audience consisted of other committee members, a few local people including a group of secondary school students and their teacher, and a two stylishly hippie French tourists. The woman giving the presentation repeatedly used the phrase we must "wake the genes we carry in our blood." Her discourse also displayed an interesting ambivalence about "the foreign." On the one hand, Europeans were known for plundering many Mexican historical documents and other elements of indigenous culture; however, "we should not be too angry, because now our

[135] See Alonso (1988) for a discussion on the ways in which popular and official discourses mutually define each other.

culture is known in other parts of the world," and now Europeans were learning from her, taking classes about medicinal plants (she glanced at me and the two French tourists). Mexico is the "cradle of knowledge," she said, and the Aztecs already knew everything before the arrival of the ignorant Spaniards. They never practiced human sacrifice, she reiterated, because it would have been incongruous with their respectful culture. The idea that they did practice sacrifices was a lie told by the Spaniards in order to justify their domination. And carbon-14 studies show that no blood was found on the so-called sacrificial stone in the Templo Mayor. The Aztecs were a culture that respected the earth and were very ecologically minded. We could learn from them. We don't need pharmacies or other "*transnacionales*" (like Coca Cola and Sabritas, which have been proven to be addictive and are unhealthy—Coke is really good as a toilet cleaner). Healing comes from the earth, from trees. She says she's learned more from lying in a tree and listening to its advice than from the university.

One woman in the audience, a teacher, said that it's not their fault that things are bad. In some agitation, she said that, although she was dressed well, she comes from the *pueblo* and does appreciate her culture and that of her ancestors, who have taught her much. The lecturer replied that of course it wasn't their fault, but that "we are few" who love our culture and respect the earth. The fault lies with European and American culture, with TV that traps children. Also, "we" should be proud to be "*indios*," even if it's not the appropriate word, since "Indians are from India." She also mentioned the problem of Mexico becoming a "*colonia del extranjero*" and of Mexicans losing their identity as Mexicans. She mentioned the "*hermanos Zapatistas*" who were trying to "reclaim their identity" but had experienced so many problems.

The first dance groups began to arrive on the 22nd. These included representatives of both the *Conchero* and the *Azteca* style of dance (see Gonzalez 2005 for a comparison

of dance styles). They danced first inside the church in front of the remains, then formed a circle and danced in the atrium. Some people were selling tie-dyed clothing and beaded jewelry, but there was little other activity. More tourists had arrived to pitch their tents around the church, most of them European (German, French and Spanish), as well as a few Americans and a number of Mexicans. A curing tent and a sweat bath had also been set up.

More members of the Comité were also present. One of their leaders, a some-time university student named Alonso, talked to me for some time about the importance of the "indigenous lifestyle," which he said was about listening to the earth and living a less elaborate life, because modernity and progress often "*nos bloquean*," or "block us."[136] He told me that life in the country is better, more real, and simpler. He also used to live "*en progreso*," but is much happier now. He also talked about the problems between Mexico and the U.S., saying that it bothered him when Europeans and Americans came to get information from him, or take photos and film the dances, just to take advantage. But then he winked at me, saying he had four girlfriends, each of whom has a child by him, and that the *compañera* who was with him was "very understanding."

Committee members were selling pamphlets that outlined their philosophy: exposés on the lies told about the practice of human sacrifice and other "great lies in history," which included the story of Iturbide inventing the Mexican flag (it is based on prehispanic symbolism), the Mercatur world maps which make powerful countries look big and colonized countries look small, and the stereotypes of the Apache, among other things.

[136] The poster announcing the festival proclaims "The wisdom and customs inherited by our Mexican grandfathers transcends in every Epoch, toward the world of the 21st century."

The big day was the 23rd, celebrated as the "500th Anniversary of the Birth of Cuauhtémoc." The air filled with the smell of heavy incense and the sound of drums and rattles, as the dances begun. The dancers were really quite impressive; the majority wore costumes with very elaborate decoration and plumage (Fidel commented that the feathers alone must cost a fortune). There were a few different styles of costumes: really elaborate ones with feather headdresses and shields, sequined and appliquéd collars and loincloths; plain white clothing with red headbands, and ringed tunics and boots made of leather. Most wear ankle bracelets made of shells and seeds, which produce a characteristic sound during the dance. In general, the men were more elaborately dressed than the women. Gender performance varied between dance styles; the *concheros* tend to emphasize gender equality, while the *mexicas* express an aggressive, warrior-based ideology in which men are more highly valued than women.[137] Some dances incorporate Catholic imagery, particularly the Virgin of Guadalupe, while others are "purely" prehispanic. Many of the dancers were not indigenous, at least phenotypically. Inside the church, each group danced alone in front of the remains, while outside, they danced all together to the music of drums. Few, if any, of the dance groups are from Ixcateopan. There are dancers in Ixcateopan, but Don Jairo says "*les da pena*" ("they are embarrassed") in front of the fancier dances.

The highlight of the day, at least according to the reaction of the audience members, was the performance of the *Voladores de Papantla*. Originally from Veracruz, the *Voladores* include a musician who plays a drum and flute, and several dancers. All

[137] Rostas (1996) argues that the Concheros, who mix prehispanic and Catholic imagery and express a worldview in which men and women are "separate but equal" (223), tend to come from middle class backgrounds. The Mexica, on the other hand, participate in an aggressive *mexicanidad* which stems from their position as members of the urban working class. They are, she writes, the "angry young men of the movement who, on the whole, reveal themselves as fanatical and intolerant, not only of each other, but also of other groups of dancers" (224).

climb to the top of a vertical pole, the musician sits on the tip and plays, and the other participants spin around the pole as they descend, tied to it by their ankles. Galinier argues that the pole was originally a symbol of the axis between heaven and earth, and was part of an Otomí fertility rite, now performed in Veracruz as part of Carnival (1996).[138] Now considered one of the most representative practices of Mexican culture, many tourists know the *Voladores* as the dancers who perform for tips outside of the National Museum of Anthropology and History in Mexico City. In Ixcateopan, they didn't ask for tips, as far as I could tell, which seemed to make this event more "ritualistic" than the performances for tourists in front of the museum of anthropology. As they were performing, a man got on a loudspeaker, and played inspirational music as he recited an elegy to Cuauhtémoc. He was shushed by various audience members, but continued anyway, taking advantage of his captive audience.

The Eagle and the Condor

Every four years since 1992, representatives of Native American "*etnias*" from Patagonia to Alaska carry out a summit meeting in Teotihuacán, near Mexico City. In October of 2000, however, the "race" known as the Eagle and the Condor, was inaugurated in Ixcateopan, commemorating five hundred years since the birth of Cuauhtémoc. The two sacred arrows born by the two sections of the race, one traveling from the south (the condor) and the other from the north (the eagle), were to meet in Iguala, continuing on to initiate the event in the plaza Eulalia Guzmán in Ixcateopan at noon. The summit itself would be held in Teotihuacan from the 25th to the 30th of the month. Crowds of local students turned out to greet them, bearing signs saying

[138] Dolores Roldán, defender of the Ixcateopan tradition, argues that the pole of the *Voladores* is linked to the Carnival pole of the Ahuileros who, she claims, commemorate the death of Cuauhtémoc. Dehouve mentions that the *palo volador* was performed in Guerrero until the seventeenth century (1994:142).

"Welcome to Ixcateopan, Cradle of *Mexicanidad*." The runners finally arrived at five o'clock, by which time the students had gone home to eat. "We're always late and never on time," said one runner. "As we run, we follow the grandfathers, the staffs, and they don't always lead us in a straight line."

I had a long discussion with Matthew, who had traveled all the way from the Yukon Territory. He told me that he felt the event was important because "it helps indigenous people return to their roots." Living in the Yukon, he is closer to his past because the white man only invaded about 150 years ago. People here were conquered five hundred years ago, but the consequences have been the same: the natives have been cut off from their past. "The people are off their blocks; they're off cue." The Eagle and the Condor helps them get back on track. He himself, like many native people, had problems with alcoholism and lost his family as a result. After going to Alcoholics Anonymous for a couple of years, he started to get involve with the "indigenous lifestyle," which gave him a new start. The elders of the movement are like the sponsors in A.A; they are guides on the path. They tell him that we all have genetic memory in our blood, and if we awaken it, we can remember what life was like for our ancestors. Following the grandfathers is one way of awakening this genetic memory.

The staffs that were laid out on the floor of the temple, in front of the remains of Cuauhtémoc, are the grandfathers. If you take care of them, they will take care of you. Someone always stays with the staffs, watching over them day and night. They come from all over the Americas, just like the runners. Powerful talismans are attached to them—feather, bear claws, and others. The runners run with the staffs pointing straight up and down, connecting the cosmos and the earth (like the *palo* of the *Voladores*). Some of the staffs belong to specific people, like the one carried by a runner whose grandmother asked him to carry it because it had special significance for her. Sometimes,

Matthew cries when he runs, remembering how he hurt people in his own life, how alcohol was more important to him than his own son.

Cuauhtémoc has always been an important leader for the indigenous people, but they are only recently beginning to wake up and rediscover their roots. He himself has only been following the path for about five years. The journey is the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy, Hopi, he thinks, that one day the eagle and the condor would one day reunite, allowing the culture to be reborn so that the people could live it again.

I asked Matthew about the large number of non-indigenous people that were part of the group. He said, yes, there are quite a few whites who like to follow Indian culture, the culture of the First Nations. Some members of the group would get angry, saying that these whites were just "culture-grabbers," stealing native cultures. Matthew doesn't mind them, though. The journey is for everyone, like the t-shirts say, "there is only one race, the human race." He tries to see things that way, to really open his heart, but sometimes it makes him angry. I asked about how non-Indians could access the genetic memory of the ancestors; he said he didn't know.

Many of the conferences were given in Spanish. The group's leader, a Navajo from Arizona with grey hair and a long beard, spoke for a long time about how badly the Indians had been treated in the past, and the importance of being true to our roots. He spoke a little in English, saying that everyone should learn Spanish. It would even be better for those from Canada to learn Spanish instead of French; Matthew wished they had provided a translator.

We all joined hands in a half-circle which opened at the tomb of Cuauhtémoc so that the group could share in the energy of the place. Songs were sung in Lakota, Nahuatl, Spanish and English. A young boy from Arizona sang his own song, and everyone responded, "Hau." Fidel whispered to me, "See? They do say 'How'."

Aztec Dancers, Ixcateopan

Culture, Performance, Place

The above mentioned commemorative performances are clearly expressions of "culture" in the anthropological sense of "the semantic space, the field of signs and practices, in which human beings construct and represent themselves and others, and hence their societies and histories" (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992: 27). But they also play with other ways of imagining culture, both in terms of popular and nationalist ideology. The festivals constitute an opportunity to embody and display aspects of "Indian culture" for both indigenous and non-indigenous audiences. The presentation of Indianness is both performative and pedagogical. Living life in balance with nature and eschewing material consumption are the main elements of Indian culture, and are

expressed in conferences and teaching sessions, as well as in aesthetically marked practices like dance, music and healing ceremonies. These are not considered by participants to be "folklore," but rather "authentic" elements of "Indian culture" or "the indigenous lifestyle," conceived of as "the way the ancestors lived." In general, the time and place to which "the indigenous lifestyle" refers is America before the arrival of Europeans. Like Alonso's idealization of "life in the country," "indigenous culture" in this context is part of a nostalgic imaginary that does not take into account most elements of the day to day lives of "real" Indians—outdoor latrines and back-breaking agricultural labor, among others (see Lomnitz 1992: 129 for a discussion of mestizo nostalgia).[139] This imaginary is part of the discourse on "deep Mexico" celebrated by anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (1996), who argues that the European-influenced aspects of Mexican culture and society are superficial elements constitute the "imaginary Mexico" grafted onto its real, indigenous culture.[140]

Authentic culture, in this context, is traditional culture, a way of living uncontaminated by European influence. As practice, expressed through the body, it is accessible to all members of "the human race," and represents an alternative to life in late modernity. Mimesis, then, is one means of accessing Indianness. By dressing up in indigenous costumes and performing indigenous dances, participants take the Indian into their own bodies, appropriating the Other (see Deloria 1999: 117). On the other hand, rather like the Diablos of Teloloapan, those who identify as indigenous may feel they are expressing their inner Selves, intensifying who they really are.

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[139] The genre of Indianness celebrated in Ixcateopan is related to the New Age concept of "the Indian teacher," with its "entirely positive valoration of indianness, connection with earth, spirituality; ignoring of social and political realities, creation of space shared by whites and Indians " (Deloria 1999: 174).

[140] Despite personal sympathy for Bonfil's position, Lomnitz argues that in truth, Mexico as a nation-state "is a creature of modernity and its roots cannot be traced further back than the colonial period. In this sense, the 'imaginary' Mexico is still the only Mexico that has existed as a nation-state" (1992: 248).

But indigenous culture is also imagined as memory, carried in the body in the form of genes and blood. Genetic memory is only available to the true descendents of the ancestors, those who have the blood of the grandfathers running in their veins.[141] Both primordial genetic inheritance and cultural patrimony, the double discourse of culture as memory (invisible) and practice (visible), allows for the embodied participation of Indians and non Indians in the "indigenous lifestyle."

The fact remains, however, that the majority of the participants in the festivals are either not indigenous, or represent an elite stratum within indigenous groups. They have the resources to travel, a certain level of formal or informal education, and a reflexive relation to both indigenous and non-indigenous "culture." Those indigenous people who do not perceive the value of their culture may be perceived as having a "false consciousness" which reflects the imposition of dominant ideological structures as well as the social and economic marginalization that forces them to concentrate on the matter of daily survival. They have been blocked by the five hundred years of colonial history that "interrupted" the development of Indian culture. This is not to say that the participants in the festivals are entirely unaware of the reality of indigenous life in Mexico and elsewhere; many are fervently committed to the transformation of the inequalities that mark the modern Mexican social landscape. But the ahistorical construction of "the indigenous lifestyle" often replicates the discourse of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century nationalists, which invisibilized "real" Indians, as it exalted a

[141] Defending native author N. Scott Momaday's strategic use of the essentializing discourse of "blood," Strong and Van Winkle write, "Momaday's use of blood imagery aims not to differentiate but to relate; not to administer but to imagine; not to impose quantified identities upon others but to make sense of the intersubjective quality of his own experience; not to appropriate the land of others but to appropriate the experiences of his own ancestors. When read in the context of the Native American experience with blood reckoning , Momaday's 'memory in the blood' becomes a refiguring of 'Indian blood' that makes it a vehicle of connection and integration—literally a re-membering—rather than one of calculation and differentiation" (1996: 562).

romanticized view of their glorious past. As Deborah Root argues, "good intentions can occlude the persistence of extremely problematic assumptions about culture and history. Sincerity is not enough and can be damaging in its own right, in part because it can be used as a pretext to gain discursive terrain, while evading the question of who controls, or is trying to control, the discourse" (1997: 230).

Indianness in Mexico today is far removed from, if still related to, the indigenous cultures that existed before the Conquest. Gutiérrez argues that being Indian has more to do with a relationship to the hegemonic culture than a primordial essence. She writes,

> Contemporary Indianness consists of a multilayered legacy of cultural traditions derive from historical and social transformations. These are the arguable vestiges of preconquest years, the durability of colonial Catholicism in helping to provide mechanisms of social cohesion, the capacity of protest against repression, and the influence of the education and acculturation policies of the modern nation state. Indian ethnic identity is also an ongoing process of construction immersed in dominant patterns of advanced capitalism" (1999: 44).

For participants in the Ixcateopan festivities, Indianness also emerges from a relation to dominant economic, political and social structures, particularly expressed as a critical attitude toward western cultural imperialism. Performing the "indigenous" in Ixcateopan, a town that does not self-identify as such, provides participants in the Cuauhtémoc commemorations with a way to construct native identities, confronting the "world historical encounter" that has forced indigenous people into a subordinate position in relation to the rest of Mexico, paralleling Mexico's position in relation to the United States. They fetishize blood and culture in order to participate in a discourse of authenticity—authentic culture, authentic history, and authentic place—in contrast to the inauthenticity represented by modernity.

> The authentic, as numerous scholars have pointed out, is a culturally constructed category created in opposition to a perceived state of inauthenticity. The authentic serves as a way to imagine and idealize the real, the traditional, and the organic in

> opposition to the less satisfying qualities of everyday life. The ways people construct authenticity depend upon the received heritage that has defined the authentic in the past. Because those seeking authenticity have already defined their own state as inauthentic, they easily locate authenticity in the figure of an Other. This Other can be coded in terms of time (nostalgia or archaism), place (the small town), or culture (Indianness). The quest for an authentic Other is a characteristically modern phenomenon, one that has often been played out in the contradictions surrounding America's long and ambivalent engagement with Indianness (Deloria 1988: 101).

The relation between the figure of Cuauhtémoc and Ixcateopan allows participants in these commemorations to feel grounded in a particular place, counteracting the effects of modern placelessness. Rootedness and spatially specific experience become increasingly important in the era of globalization. In this sense, the authenticity of the remains is as important for outsiders as it is for locals.[142] Write Gupta and Ferguson, "The irony of these times is that as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, *ideas* of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient" (1997: 39).

THE OTHER IXCATEOPAN

> As sources fill the historical landscape with their facts, they reduce the room available to other facts. Even if we imagine the landscape to be forever expandable, the rule of interdependence implies that new facts cannot emerge in a vacuum. They will have to gain their right to existence in light of the field constituted by previously created facts. They may dethrone some of these facts, erase or qualify others. The point remains that sources occupy competing positions in the historical landscape" (Trouillot 1995: 50).

[142] Giddens writes, "In conditions of late modernity, we live 'in the world' in a different sense from previous eras of history. Everyone still continues to live a local life, and the constraints of the body ensure that all individuals, at every moment, are contextually situated in time and space. Yet the transformations of place, and the intrusion of distance into local activities, combined with the centrality of mediated experience, radically change what 'the world' actually is. This is so both on the level of the 'phenomenal world' of the individual and the general universe of social activity within which collective social life is enacted. Although everyone lives a local life, phenomenal worlds for the most part are truly global" (1991: 187).

There is a widespread belief in the mountains of Guerrero in the idea that Cuauhtémoc had Yope ancestry. Don Pablo Domínguez works as a janitor in the preparatory school of Huamuxtitlán. He is also the custodian of a small museum housing prehispanic objects discovered during the excavation of a small pyramid in the center of town. The collection is not complete, he says. Some of the pieces were loaned to the INAH, supposedly for six months. But it's been eighteen years, and they still haven't been returned. When I spoke to him in March of 2000, he related the following:

> Look, in many parts of the state of Guerrero, there is a lot of information about the *cultura madre*, or the Olmecs. In this case, there are several examples of rock art in Acatlán, municipio of Chilapa. In Juxtlahuaca. In Teopanticuantitlán, in Copalillo. And we have even more arqueological vestiges in the mountain region. This *cultura madre*…from there many later tribes developed. In this case, the Yopi Indians were the continuers of the Olmecas, in the state of Guerrero. And in the state of Oaxaca, we know about the Mixtecos and the Zapotecos. This Olmec influence is strong in both states. But, to be more precise, here in the mountain region, we know that all of the first human settlements are of the YOpi Indians. These, in fact, were very warlike in the defense of their liberty, yes? We know that, in various incursions, the, the Mexicas tried to dominate us. But, in the case of those who lived in this region of the *Montaña*, near the frontiers with Oaxaca, and with Puebla, our people did not allow themselves to be dominated. They reSISted the Mexicas.
>
> Huamuxtitlán, although its roots are Nahuatl, "*Huamoxitl*" or *huamuchil* is a fruit that grows here. "*Titlán*" is also from a Nahuatl root, which means place of, or among the *huamúchiles*. There are a lot of towns with Nahuatl place-names, because of the dominAtion. But not precisely because our origins are Nahuatl. Because, the pyramid we have here is from the year 1,100, and the Mexicas began their peregrination from Aztlán in 1,111. So our *pueblos* are more ancient than the Mexicas. That's why I mentioned a while ago the development of the *cultura madre*, which are the Olmecas. First the Olmecas Then, the Mixtecos-Zapotecos. In other places, toward the Gulf, the Mayas. Toward the middle of Mesoamerica, the Teotihuacanos, and the Toltecs. Finally, the Mexicas. Those are the ones that tried to dominate us, but, basically, after certain confrontations, relations became friendly. So much so that the Mexicas came to certain ceremonial rites, and the Yopis, the Yopis went to certain of Moctezuma's ceremonial rites. But, when the Spaniards came, our Yopis defended themselves again. They even responded to the Spaniards lead by Hernán Cortés that, if they hadn't let themselves be

dominated by the lord Moctezuma, they CERtainly wouldn't permit domination by the new invaders, yes?

And we also know that, the 14th of May of 1531, the Yopi Indians confronted the Spaniards in San Luís Acatlán. In the *Costa Chica*. And it was a mess, on both sides. And well, finally, Hernán Cortés sent Vasco Porcallo and others of his soldiers to appease the Yopi Indians, but peacefully. That is one version. And there are some written accounts. But on the other hand, we also know that Hernán Cortés was very angry with the Yopis, because they had butchered so many Spaniards. So he gave even more weapons, so that the warlike Yopis would be destroyed in San Luís Acatlán. The truth is, our *pueblos* were decimated by the supremacy of Spanish weapons. Our people walked around half-naked. But the Spaniards, carried shields, carried armor, not like in medieval times, but yes, very well protected. Moreover, they had canons. And our people with, with arrows, with rocks, well, they couldn't fight on the same terms. So, in some cases, they finished off the *indígenas*. But in other case, well, they still reSISted.

And even today, as an inheritance from the struggle, we have the quality of not letting ourselves be manipulated, by bad government. Because, unfortunately, in Guerrero, the resistance goes on, yes? Against corRUPtion, the government, against the abuse of authority, and well, this is our inHERitance from, our ancestors, yes?[143]

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[143] Mire, este, en varios pueblos, del estado de Guerrero, hay mucha información sobre la cultura madre. O sea, los Olmecas. En este caso, hay gran cantidad, de pinturas rupestres, en Acatlán del municipio de Chilapa. En Juxtlahuaca. En Teopantecuanitlán en Copallilo. Y más vestigios arqueológicos tenemos en toda la región de la montaña. Es esta cultura madre, de allí emanan muchas, muchas tribus que posteriormente se desarrollaron. En este caso, son, los Olmecas...los, indios Yopis son continuadores de los Olmecas. En el estado de Guerrero. Y en el Estado de Oaxaca, sabemos que los Mixtecos y los Zapotecos. Por eso, la influencia Olmeca, se da tanto en un estado como en otro. Pero, para ser más precisos, aquí en la región de la montaña, sabemos que todos los primeros asentamientos humanos, son, de los indios Yopis. Estos, de hecho, fueron muy...aguerridos, en la defensa de su libertad, ¿sí? Sabemos que en varias incursiones de invasión, los, los Mexicas, pretendieron dominarlos. Pero, en el caso, de los que habitaron aquí en la región de la montaña, casi colindando con Oaxaca, y Puebla, nuestros pueblos, no se dejaron dominar. Resistieron a las investidas Mexicas.
Huamuxtitlán, aunque es, este, con las raíces Nahuatl, "Huamoxitl," huamuchil. Es una fruta que se da aquí en la región. "Titlán" es también, raíz Nahuatl, que quiere decir lugar de, o entre los, huamuchiles. Comúnmente, hay muchos pueblos, con nombre Nahuatl, por, la dominación. Pero no precisamente, porque hayamos sido, de origen Nahuatl. Porque, si, si la pirámide que tenemos, es del año mil cien, y los Mexicas, su peregrinación de Aztlán, la iniciaron en el año mil ciento once, entonces, nuestros pueblos son más antiguos de los Mexicas. Por eso mencioné hace un rato, el desarrollo de la cultura madre, que son los Olmecas. Primero los Olmecas. Después, los, Mixtecos-Zapotecos. En otros lugares, hacia el Golfo, los Mayas. Hacia, Mes, el centro de Mesoamérica, los Teotihuacanos, y los Toltecas. Al final, los Mexicas. Que ellos son los que pretendieron dominarnos, pero, en resumidas cuentas se dio, después de ciertas confrontaciones, la relación de amistad. Tan es así, que los Mexicas, venían a algunos ritos ceremoniales yopis, y los Yopis a su vez, acudían a algunos ritos ceremoniales de Moctezuma. Pero, a la llegada de los españoles, los nuestros, los Yopis, nuevamente, se defendieron. Inclusive, les contestaron a las (?) de

Don Pablo went on to describe all of the archaeological remains that could be found in the region mountain region, particularly near Huamuxtitlán, comparing them with the ruins of ancient Greece. He claimed that the region was splendid in prehispanic times. When I asked him about Cuauhtémoc, he replied:

> Look, according to what is written, we know that the mother of Cuauhtémoc was from a Chontal region found in Tepecoacuilco, near Iguala. And, well, we're close to Iguala here, too. It's just that there isn't any infrastructure to connect us. But, if Cuauhtémoc's mother was from that Chontal region, it is logical that she would have the blood of the Yopi Indians, yes? And, well, we also know that when Hernán Cortés assassinated [Cuauhtémoc] in Las Hibueras, he was brought, to what is now the territory of Guerrero. And the held vigil over the body, for a few nights, in the town of Temalacatzingo, which is here in the municipio of Olinalá. There are some who even dare to mention that possibly the remains of the Aztec emperor are in this Ixcateopan, for the large number of archaeological sites that we have. Although, well, it is natural that those who today pay him homage in Ixcateopan, in the other Ixcateopan, well, also defend their position.
>
> The problem is that the *señora* archaeologist Eulalia Guzmán didn't dig deep enough in her research. In both places, so that she could clarify the situation. Where Cuauhtémoc was really buried, in the region of the *Montaña*, or the other Ixcateopan. But, by judgment, by presidential decree, we know that these investigations were believed, and they were registered, by Doña Eulalia Guzmán, in Ixcateopan del Norte. Without having undertaken studies in Ixcateopan de la Montaña. But, well, time will prove us right. Or at least clarify the situation, of

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Hernán Cortés, que si no se habían dejado dominar, por el señor Moctezuma, MEnos iba a permitir, la dominación, de los, de los nuevos invasores, ¿sí?
Y, también sabemos que el catorce de marzo, de mil quinientos treinta y uno, los indios Yopis, les hicieron fuerte, les hicieron frente, a los españoles, en San Luís Acatlán. En la Costa Chica. Y se armó un desastre, entre unos y otros, y bueno, finalmente, Hernán Cortés, mandó a Vasco Porcallo, y a otros de sus soldados, para apaciguar a los indios Yopis, pero por la buena. Esa es una versión. Y hay algunas notas escritas. Pero, por otro lado, también sabemos, que, Hernán Cortés se molestó mucho, contra los Yopis, porque les habían hecho una carnicería de españoles, y, dotó de más armamento, para que diezmaran a los aguerridos Yopis, en San Luís Acatlán. La verdad es, que en nuestros pueblos, fueron diezmados por la supremacía, de las armas españoles. Los nuestros andaban semi-encuerados. En cambio los españoles, pues traían escudos, traían armaduras, ya no, como en la época medieval, pero sí, muy protegidas. Además con cañones. Y los nuestros con, con flechas, con piedras, pues no, no podía darse, una guerra, pues, en las mismas condiciones. Por lo tanto, en algunos casos, acabaron con, con los indígenas. Pero, en algunos otros casos, pues todavía, se resisTIERon.
Y aún hoy, como herencia de lucha, tenemos, el no ser dejados, por los malos gobiernos. Porque lamentablemente, en Guerrero, siguen dándose la resistencia, ¿sí? contra la corrupCION, del gobierno, contra el abuso de la autoridad, y, pues, éso lo tenemos de herENcia, desde...nuestros antepasados, ¿sí?

where the remains of the Aztec emperor really are. But the fact that he had Guerrerense blood, Yopi blood, that much is true.[144]

The discourse on Cuauhtémoc in Ixcateopan de la Montaña relies on oral tradition, the interpretation of codices, the presence of archaeological remains, the continued use of indigenous languages and a certain level of resentment against the resources Ixcateopan del Norte has been able to mobilize as a result of being declared the "official" site of the tomb.

On the day Fidel, his friend Roberto and I arrived in Ixcateopan in January of 2000, the ritual of the transfer of power from the outgoing to the incoming *comisario* had just ended. The men were drinking in front of the comisario, and a brass band was playing. The new comisario received us with several other men, all in various stages of drunkenness. The outgoing comisario showed us an official report made by INAH that analyzes the archaeological ruins found in Ixcateopan. According to the report, a priest from Chilapa asked INAH to become involved after learning of a local commission that had begun to excavate, after clearing land to build a school. The report said that the ruins date from 1200-1520, the Post Classical period, and include some evidence of the earlier culture of Teotihuacan. It doesn't mention Cuauhtémoc or any *restos*.

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[144] Mire, por lo que está escrito, sabemos que, eh, la madre de Cuauhtémoc, fue de una región Chontal que se haya en Tepecoacuilco, cerca de Iguala. Y bueno, aquí también estamos cerca de Iguala., ¿sí? El problema está en que no hay vías de comunicación. Pero, si la madre de Cuauhtémoc fue, de este, esa región Chontal, lo lógico es, que también tiene sangre de los indios Yopis, ¿sí? Y bueno, también sabemos que cuando Hernán Cortés, lo asesinó en las Hibueras, este, se lo trajeron, de preferencia en la zona Guer...del hoy territorio de Guerrero. Y lo velaron, algunas noches, en el pueblo de Temalacazingo que está aquí en el municipio de Olinalá. Hay quienes se atreven a mencionar, de que posiblemente, los restos del emperador Azteca, estén en este Ixcateopan, por la gran cantidad de vestigios arqueológicos que tenemos, aunque, pues, es natural que quienes hoy, le rinden homenajes en todo, en Ixcateopan, en el otro Ixcateopan, pues también defienden su posición.
El problema está, en que la señora la arqueóloga Eulalia Guzmán, no profundizó, en cuanto investigaciones. Tanto en un lugar como en otro, para sí, pues, aclarar la situación. Donde realmente fue sepultado, Cuauhtémoc, en la región de la Montaña, o en el otro Ixcateopan. Pero, por, por dictamen, por decreto presidencial, sabemos que le dieron carpetazo a esas investigaciones, y quedó registrado, por doña Eulalia Guzmán, el Ixcateopan, del Norte. Sin hacer estudios en el Ixcateopan de la Montaña. Pero bueno, el tiempo nos dará la razón. O en su defecto, se aclarará la situación, de donde, realmente, quedaron los restos del emperador Azteca. Pero de que, pues, tuvo sangre Guerrerense, sangre Yopi, eso es cierto.

After we read the report, several of the men said that they would only provide information if I could give promise something in return, like a paved road accessing the ruins or a tourist center. They felt it wasn't fair that they were ignored by the government, and that the other Ixcateopan is Ixcateopan de Cuauhtémoc and is recognized on national TV as being the location of the restos of Cuauhtémoc. One man mentioned that he knew there was evidence that those remains were false, which supported the belief that Cuauhtémoc was buried here. Other evidence includes the river mentioned in the codices. There is a river here, but not in the other Ixcateopan. And here, many people here still speak dialect, which they don't in the other Ixcateopan. They brought a man to speak to me in "Mexicano" as proof. There are legends, too, that the treasure of Moctezuma is buried someone in these mountains.

They also perform indigenous dances during Carnival in honor of Cuauhtémoc, while all the dances in the other Ixcateopan come from other places. Ixcateopenses are angry because Ixcateopan used to be its own municipality, but lost that status when the *cabecera* was transferred to the nearby town of Alpoyeca. This was around the time that the old pueblo, where the old church is, got washed away by a flood. There was an even earlier village up in the hills.

By this time, the ice had been broken. I said that I would do what I could, but that, as a student, I had no influence. I didn't work for the government, and I wasn't an archaeologist. They asked if I could at least "*da importancia*" to the local traditions and make them more widely disseminated, which I said I would try to do. They showed me where the old church was under which the remains are supposed to be, claiming that the ruins under the school continue under the church. We returned a few weeks later to talk to Guillermo Escobar, a local amateur historian. He told the following story:

Hernán Cortés had Cuauhtémoc hanged in Las Hibueras, in Tabasco? He stayed. But when he got back to Tenochtitlan, those Spaniards who had stayed behind said, "we are undecided, we are unsure, that you really killed Cuauhtémoc. So, prove that you killed him, or die. So his men said, "Let's go. Let's go get the body of Cuauhtémoc and turn him in, because they don't have any PROOF. They went, they investigated, they investigated, they asked, "No, his relatives took him." "Where?" "They took him, I don't know, where his people are, his race." That's supposed to be here, Ixcateopan, no? Okay. So here he comes. By that time, the *indígenas* had already brought him. They had been carrying him for fifteen days. Or they rested for day, or two days. But because the Indians were so connected, I mean, by the mails, that the notice is passed on that the whites are coming, the Spaniards. So, we are told about another point in the tradition. Here, there is a town about two, three kilometers away, which is called Tecoyame, a very small town. And near the town is a, a row of stones, which we call the *Cinta Piedra*, the Rock Belt. And they say that, that way, the *indígenas* jumped across, with the body of Cuauhtémoc, trying not to leave, like the song says, no? Not to leave prints. Trying to erase the trail, no?

And when they arrived here, said the one who told me this from Atlamajalcingo del Monte, an indigenous prince and princess received the body. They say, "Look, here is the true body of Cuauhtémoc, the emperor, our king." They say, "Yes, there we will bury him. Enter." "No, the Spaniards are following us. They are about eight days behind us. Let's see what you do." "Gather up some of those bones. Gather up those bones over there and, simulate a body. Give the real body to me. It will stay here. And keep going, to the other Ixcateopan." And, well, when the Spaniards got to this Ixcateopan, they asked the princess, "This is Ixcateopan?" "Yes, this is Ixcateopan." "Is Cuauhtémoc here?" "Nooo. Cuauhtémoc…it's been about twenty days since they brought him through here. They've taken him away; he's not here." They left, Hernán Cortés. Following those others to Ixcateopan. And [when they got there], they said…. "This is Ixcateopan?" "Yes, this is Ixcateopan." "Listen, is Cuauhtémoc here?" "Yes, here he is. BURied." "Yes? Here?" "Yes, here he is."

Cortés didn't bother to see if the bones of Cuauhtémoc were true or false, I mean, "Now I've proved that Cuauhtémoc is dead," which is what he needed to save his life. And well, that was it. So the notice arrives ahead of him [in Mexico City]. "He is buried in Ixcateopan." "Oh, all right." But the princess did it to save the real body of Cuauhtémoc. We suppose it stayed here.

I went to that other Ixcateopan, five or six years ago, and I noticed some really bid vertebrae. And they didn't really connect with each other, and there is an eighty

percent chance that they aren't [real]. That's all that is known. Versions, nothing else.[145]

This is a tale, says don Guillermo, based on invention and imagination. But there are proofs. Those codices which are sometimes interpreted in the other Ixcateopan as supporting the official tradition refer, in fact, to Ixcateopan de la Montaña. Don Pedro claims that they are not entirely trustworthy, as many are colonial copies of prehispanic originals, "interpreTAtions and transLAtions," he reiterates, commissioned by Spaniards who may not have concerned themselves with the "truth" of the past, but rather, of the political necessities of the present. But Don Guillermo feels that they provide important

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[145] Hernán Cortés mandó ahorcar a Cuauhtémoc, en las Higueras, Tabasco? Se quedó. Pero su regreso a Tenochtitlan, le dijeron, "Aquí los españoles que nos quedamos, estamos indecisos, no estamos seguros, que haya matado a Guautemuz. Así es que compruébanos que lo mataste o, tú te mueres…. "Vámonos. Vamos a traer el cuerpo de Cuauhtémoc para entregarlo aquí porque no tienen pruebas." Se vinieron para llegar a las Higueras, ya no hay nada. Investigaron, investigaron, preguntaron, "No, se lo llevaron sus parientes." "¿Para dónde?" "Se lo llevaron, no sé pues, para donde están sus mayores, su raza." Supone que es aquí de Ixcateopan, ¿no? Bueno. Y allí vienen. Pero entonces ya los indígenas ya lo traían. Ya unos quince días lo traían, cargando. O descansaban un día o dos, así. Pero como estaban tan conectados los indígenas, o sea de los, los correos, que llega la noticia que allí vienen los blancos, los españoles. De modo que, nos cuenta…otro punto de la tradición. Aquí tenemos como a dos, tres kilómetros un pueblo que se llama Tecoyame, un pueblo muy pequeño. Y cerca del pueblito está una, una fila de piedras, que nosotros la llamamos la Cinta Piedra. Y dicen, que por allí venían, brincando los indígenas, con el cuerpo de Cuauhtémoc, tratando de no dejar, dice la canción que no quede huellas, ¿no? Tratando de borrar rastro, ¿hmm?

Que sí, y al llegar aquí, dice él que me está contando, de Atlamajalcingo del Monte, que lo recibió una princesa y un príncipe, indígena, lo recibió. Dice, "Mira, aquí está el verdadero cuerpo de Cuauhtémoc, el emperador, nuestro rey." Dice, "Sí, allá lo vamos a dar sepultura. Pasa." "No, nos vienen siguiendo los españoles. Como, los trae, o los trajimos como de una distancia de unos ocho días de camino. No, pues a ver como lo hacen." "Júntese por allí unos huesos, ¿no? Júntense los huesos por allí y, simulen el cuerpo, y el verdadero cuerpo, échenmelo. Aquí que se quede. Y síganle, al otro Ixcateopan." Y bueno, pues, cuando llegaron, los españoles, aquí en este Ixcateopan, le preguntaron a la princesa. "¿Aquí es Ixcateopan?" "Sí, señor, aquí es Ixcateopan." "¿Aquí está Cuauhtémoc?" "Nooo. Cuauhtémoc, hace unos veinte días que lo pasaron, ya se lo llevaron; aquí no está." Se fueron, ¿Hernán Cortés? Siguiendo aquellos a Ixcateopan. "Sí es Ixcateopan?" "Sí, es Ixcateopan." "Oiga, ¿aquí está Cuauhtémoc?" "Sí, aquí está, enterrado." "Sí, ¿aquí?" "Sí, aquí está."

A Cortés no le importó a ver si eran positivos los huesos de Cuauhtémoc, o si eran falsos, o sea, "Ya comprobé que sí está muerto Cuauhtémoc," lo que Cortés necesitaba para salvar la vida. Y bueno, ya estuvo. Y que llega antes…la noticia. "Está enterrado en Ixcateopan." "Oh, bueno."

Pero la princesa lo hizo con tal de salvar el verdadero cuerpo de Cuauhtémoc. Se supone que se quedó aquí. Yo fui hace unos cinco, seis años a aquel Ixcateopan, y noté unas vértebras muy grandes…como que no, no liga una con otra, y además pues, no hay un ochenta por ciento de que pues, no son. Hasta allí, es lo único que se sabe. Por versiones, nada más.

clues to the presence of Cuauhtémoc in the region. He tells us about a visit he had from a professor from Puebla, who described the Palimpsesto de las Veinte Mazorcas.

> There on the codex there is a river, there is another, and there, where they join, is the name of Ixcateopan, in the old style….The professor asked us, "What is Ixcateopan doing there? What does it mean? What does this Ixcateopan have to do with where the rivers join?" Well, in this Ixcateopan, inscribed here on the codex, there is an *indígena*. With a DIadem. A royal diadem. Here, next to it, on each side, right and left, a Spaniard, a Spaniard here and a Spaniard there. And on the left side, the little emblem of Cuauhtémoc, with a little eagle painted pointing downwards, they always paint it with its head pointing down, like that. This is what concerned the professor. As if he were saying, asking us, if this Indian was Cuauhtémoc, or for what reason the glyph, his emblem, was found there. Well, without a doubt there is no other *indígena* with that emblem, the one with the eagle falling or descending, just HIM, no? So, that's one thing.
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> Downriver, because the river goes on, there are two black marks. And we thought that they could be the lakes, about a kilometer away. The lakes are united. One here, then the other here, like this, they are united by a little piece of land, which connects them. And the name, the name of the Citlaltépetl, the hill of Huamuxtitlán, is a white hill, called Citlaltépetl. Now, why is it Citlaltépetl? Do you all speak Nahuatl? Well, in Nahuatl, cit, *citlalli* is star. Or little star. *Citlallis*. And *tepetl*, well, is hill, no? Well, it is white hill, mixed with star. On the codex, the word Citlaltépetl is written. So, those are other two points, or three points.
>
> The other point, the one which concerns us more, the emotion, or the controversy, or the curiosity…upriver on the, the river that is here on the right, is the name of Tlapa. And to the side, the names of some towns. San Rafael, I can't remember. But the curious thing is, in the middle of Tlapa, there is a seated *indígena*, looking toward the east, with a Mexican name I can't remember. But it says in Spanish goddess of rain. And now, facing from the east to the center of Tlapa, there is another *indígena*. This one is a man. It is masculine. Also with his diadem, and he is seated, and smiling. And below the *indígena* one can read "Ahuiztli." You remember that Ahuizotl is the father of Cuauhtémoc. So, there it is, no? Why would the FAther of Cuauhtémoc appear there with a woman, who we could say is his mother? And here in Ixcateopan, the actual Cuauhtémoc appears, a prisoner, between two Spaniards. It is indisputable. But, that's as far as we could get.[146]

[146] Porque allí, en el, en el códice está un río, está otro, y aquí donde se juntan, es el nombre de Ixcateopan, desde lo antiguo. Pero, nos preguntaba el maestro, dice, "¿Qué hace Ixcateopan aquí? ¿Qué significa…qué tiene que ver este Ixcateopan aquí junta, a donde se juntan los dos ríos?" Pues en ese Ixcateopan, anotado en el códice…aparece un, un indígena. Con una diadema. Una diadema real. Aquí al lado, al lado de, de él, en cada uno de sus lados, lado derecho e izquierdo, un español, español aquí, español acá…Y al lado

Don Guillermo interprets the codex to mean that Cuauhtémoc's mother was a princess from the region of Tlapa who was taken as a prisoner to Tenochtitlan, where she met and married Ahuizotl, the son of the emperor Tizoc, and the father of Cuauhtémoc. He said that many nearby towns had other codices and mapas, like Chiepetlán and Coyoahualco, whose existence proved the tradition that Cuauhtémoc had roots in the Montaña. There was once a codex in Ixcateopan, but it was buried during the Revolution, and then couldn't be found. He mentions a parchment buried under one of the rocks of the Cinta Piedra, but since no one knows which rock, this evidence has been lost. Another piece of evidence supporting local tradition is the belief that Ixcateopan was built over a prehispanic pyramid which cannot be excavated because it would destroy the town.

As is the case for Ixcateopan del Norte, performance traditions related to Carnival are often evoked as another piece of evidence for the authority of the Cuauhtémoc tradition. Although we tried to return to Ixcateopan de la Montaña for Carnival, we

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izquierdo, el escudito de Cuauhtémoc, con aguilita pintada para abajo, que siempre lo pintan con la cabeza para abajo, así. Y precisamente eso era lo que le preocupaba al profesor. Como, diciéndose, preguntándonos que si ese indígena, era Cuauhtémoc, o la razón de que allí se encontraba su glifo, su escudo. Bueno, pues, indudablemente no hay otro indígena que tenga ese escudo, la de águila que cae o desciende, no más, únicamente él, ¿no? Entonces, es un punto.
Río abajo, porque sigue, continúe el tío…aparecen dos manchas negras. Y, pues, él, igual que nosotros, pusimos que, podrían ser lo que le llamamos las lagunas, a un kilómetro. Están esas lagunas, están unidas. Una aquí, luego la otra aquí, así, están unidas, por un pedacito de tierra, que se une. Y el nombre del Citlatépetl, el cerro de Huamuxtitlán, es así cerro blanco, se llama Citlatépetl. Ahora, ¿por qué Citlatépetl allí? Porque, para Uds., ¿saben Nahuatl? Bueno, en Nahuatl, el cit, citlalli es estrella. O estrellita. Citlallis. Y tepetl, pues es cerro, ¿no? Pues es cerro blanco, se mezcla con estrella. En ese códice aparece el Citlatépetl. Entonces, estos son otros dos puntos, o tres puntos.
El otro punto que, que ya es, como que…pues, ahora sí que pica más la, la emoción, o la controversia, la curiosidad…río arriba, en el, el río que está de aquí para allá a la derecha? Está el nombre de Tlapa. Y al lado, unos nombres de algunos pueblos, de San Rafael…no me acuerdo. Pero lo curioso es que, se considera que en el centro de Tlapa, está una indígena sentada, se está sonriendo, pero viéndose al oriente, con un nombre mexicano que no recuerdo. Como es, como está diciendo en español significa diosa de la lluvia. Y ahora, del oriente hacia el centro de Tlapa, aparece un indígena. Esa ya es hombre. Es masculino. También con su diadema, y está sentado, también se está sonriendo, están encontrando allá. Y abajo del indígena se lee Ahuiztli. Usted recordará que Ahuixtli es el papá de Cuauhtémoc. Entonces, allí está la cosa, la cuestión, ¿no? La interrogativa. ¿Por qué aparece el papá de Cuauhtémoc con una dama, que entre otras cosas, podría decir que era su mamá? Y aquí en Ixcateopan aparece el mero Cuauhtémoc, preso, por dos españoles, y ya…es indiscutible. Pues, francamente, hasta allí pudimos llegar.

arrived two days late. The comisario invited us to watch a video of the celebration, though. His wife and daughter served us *chicha*, a fermented fruit and sugar drink, cured with brandy. The celebration consisted of two parts: the collection of the *güentle*, or offerings of the townspeople (flowers, *chicha*, tamales, fruit), and then the dancing. For the first time, the townspeople elected a *Reina de Carnaval*, as a means of "adding interest and beauty" to the festivities. Don Guillermo said that, for him, it was a means of building a bridge from the past to the present, and "relating *indigenismo* to *hispanismo*" because the reina was connected to the Mexica damsels that were part of the ancient celebrations of the New Year. She is supposed to be responsible to the pueblo, informing the people that it's time for them to purify themselves because Lent is coming. He said he thought that because it was the first year, it was badly organized, but that it will be better next year. The queen, after being blessed in the church, was displayed on a *carro alegórico* along with her two companions, and paraded around the town as the offerings were collected.

The celebration concluded with the entrance of the *viejitos* (related to the Ahuileros of the Teloloapan region). These were men of various ages, mostly older, dressed simply and doing a shuffling dance and carrying bunches of *azumiate*, which is a flower known as having curing properties and keeping away "*los malos espíritus*." Then, the men were paired up "as if they were men and women." After they danced by themselves for a while, they were joined by the audience members, also waving branches of *azumiate*. The *chicha* was shared out among all the participants, and by the end, thanks in part to the "naughty children," the procession got a little wild, ending with everyone throwing their flowers in the air. Young people smashed *cascarones* on their friends' heads (they used to ask permission, but not anymore). Before, when he was a boy, said the *comisario*, the *viejitos* danced alone in the comisaría, with only the *principales* as

audience, "behind closed doors." Townspeople could only watch through a small window.[147] Their costumes were more traditional, as well. But the music has always been the same—a brass band. Even though there is little overt reference to Cuauhtémoc, many participants feel that the connection is clear, although they do not elaborate.

Like their counterparts in Ixcateopan del Norte, the inhabitants of Ixcateopan de la Montaña and the surrounding area have constructed a historical narrative that draws its authority from ideas surrounding heritage, performance and language, and faith in the power of documents and material ruins. In the local imaginary, history literally lives beneath the ground, in the hidden pyramids upon which people construct their daily lives and mysterious treasures which may someday be found.

A final note on counter-counter narratives: in the mountains of Oaxaca, between the coast and the capital, there is a small town whose name barely legible on the map: *Recibimiento de Cuauhtémoc*, or Reception of Cuauhtémoc.

AUTHENTICITY AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Michel Trouillot writes that historicity does not only involve "the facts of the matter" but also "the narrative of those facts." Human beings participate in history both as actors and narrators (1995: 3). He argues that "what history is matters less than how history works" (ibid. 28), and that history is not something that happens, but something that is created, both containing mentions and silences that speak to particular configurations of power. The constitution of a historical narrative depends on the establishment of a particular relationship to the knowledge contained in the narrative: a

[147] This ritual described by the *comisario* is similar to the transfer of power ceremonies in other parts of the Montaña. See Neff (1994).

relationship that depends on concepts of truth and authenticity, but also on the belief that the content of the narrative, though rooted in the past, has something to say to the present.

In Guerrero, far removed both literally and imaginarily from the centers of national power, the glorification of past deeds and great historical figures is one means of recuperating a sense of worth and pride in the face of social and economic marginalization. The struggle over who has the right to claim these deeds and heroes may exasperate those scientists and academics whose work is based in positivist epistemological paradigm. However, the elaboration of historical narratives is a key factor in the constitution of local identities.

> While [elite memory] attempted to create a consecutive account of all that had happened from a particular point in the past, popular memory made no effort to fill in the blanks. If elite time marched in a more or less linear manner, popular time danced and leaped. Elite time colonized and helped construct the boundaries of territories that we have come to call nations. But popular time was more local as well as episodic, consolidating....This was not a time that could be contained within fixed boundaries. It was measured not from beginnings but from centers… (Gillis 1994: 6).

The narratives constructed in both Ixcateopans are instances of popular memories can be defined more by their relation to the dominant historical order than to their actual substance (see Joseph and Nugent 1994: 18). Rather than emanating from the center of the nation, these narratives radiate from peripheral localities recast as centers. They "dance and leap" from personal memories to codices, to documents both "real" and "spurious," to monuments that inscribe history on the landscape, to ruminations on the power of words and ruins.

Both traditions involve the production of historical narratives based on notions of authenticity, grounded in place, text, image and language, and contingent on a particular construction of the Indian. For northern Ixcateopenses, Indians are others, either in time

or space: ancestors or inhabitants of certain nearby towns, like Coatepec Costales. For mountain Ixcateopenses, whose region is considered to be "indigenous," Indians are much closer in time and space, even for the mestizos who live there. Visitors to Ixcateopan del Norte have diverse relationships with Indians. Some are representatives of "authentic" indigenous groups, and are able to claim the authority of blood and genetic memory, also an option for mestizo visitors (who may have to work harder to awaken this memory). Non-native tourists, for whom Indians are desired "others," express admiration for indigenous culture and the desire to participate in it as an alternative to what may be perceived the alienating effects of modern life.

The inhabitants of Ixcateopan de la Montaña, located in the most marginalized region of the state, have reason to envy the position the other Ixcateopan has acquired as a result of its official status. The counter-narrative they have constructed as an alternative to the hegemonic northern tradition (itself an alternative to hegemonic "scientific" historiography) has not had the desired effect of attracting the attention of the government and other sectors. But Ixcateopan del Norte has successfully positioned itself as a site of "authentic" national and international significance.

As the members of the INAH commission argued, the invention of the Ixcateopan Cuauhtémoc tradition (see Hobsbawm 1983) emerged as a result of the particular interests of the locally prominent Juárez family, conflated with a particular constellation of power and ideology which needed powerful imagery in order to consolidate itself. However, after 1949, the tradition became an important source of local pride and identity, creating historical memory where it may not have existed before

Commemorative performances both hide and highlight Ixcateopan as a place, the "cradle of *mexicanidad*." During the September commemoration, the state helps to create Ixcateopan as a place, through the mechanism of official recognition. In February,

Ixcateopan is recreated in opposition to the state, as it allows for the performance of alternate "lifestyles" (see Gupta and Ferguson 1997: 41). For the participants in festivals honoring Cuauhtémoc, Ixcateopan becomes the center of the universe, at least for a few days. But at the same time, particularly in February, Ixcateopan itself almost disappears; the town is overrun by tourists and dancers from all over Mexico, the United States and Europe. This imaginary geography comes into being in performance, erasing Ixcateopan by imagining it, turning it into the center of country and even the continent, while most Ixcateopenses hover, unseen, on the margins of blood and culture.

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Chapter 6. Memory and Material Landscapes: The Poetics of Death in Teloloapan

LA MUERTE

The first time I encountered the rituals that Teloloapenses celebrate for the dead, I had been living there for a little over two weeks. Doña María, my landlady, had asked me (commanded me, really) to sit with her and her friends as they prayed for the soul of her mother, whose death had occurred one year before. Although I was renting it, the prayers, or *rezos*, were to take place in the living room of what had been her mother's house, where a small altar contained flowers, candles an image of the Virgin Mary, and a photograph of Doña María's mother. I remember that the droning voice of the *rezandera* hired to recite the prayers was occasionally drowned out by shouts from the nearby zócalo, where the Grito would be held in a few hours. I did not realize that my field notes for the two years I lived in Teloloapan would be liberally sprinkled with phrases like "Went to *rezos* for Don Julio," "One-year anniversary of Doña Susana's death," and "Don Pedro died last week. They're going to *levantar la sombra* tomorrow." I had not, in fact, planned to include death as a topic in my dissertation, apart from the deaths of the national heroes commemorated in civic festival. But is I soon began to sense that *la muerte* had become a major theme in my experience of Teloloapan, consuming much of my time and reflection. The death of Don Fidel in March of 2000 confirmed this feeling.

In this chapter, I turn from large-scale commemorative performances and historical narratives to the more intimate memories and practices that surround the death of a loved one,[148] tracing the connections between memory and history, between national

[148] See Huntington and Metcalf (1979) for a cross-cultural comparison of mortuary practices and death rituals.

and local spaces. Although I discuss all of the rituals that follow death, as well as the emotions and memories that they evoke, I focus on the *ofrendas*, or offerings, that characterize the *Días de los Muertos* in Teloloapan, and whose unique aesthetic provides the town with one of its most important symbols of local identity. The practice of constructing ofrendas is a means of marking loss, employing objects that invoke memories in both the producers and consumers of the offering. The ofrendas convert the trajectory of an individual's life history into a kind of theatrical display to be consumed by an audience that may include family members and friends, the general public, and the spirit of the *difunto* being remembered. The teloloapense ofrenda plays with notions of time and space, combining media and mixing scales. As a practice, as a performance, the ofrenda produces a particular kind of space, densely inhabited with objects and emotions that call to the spirit of the dead to return and enjoy the flavors of life once more, at the same time as they call to those living family members who are far away. The conspicuous consumption that many ofrendas require also displays to the community how much the creators or contractors of the ofrenda valued a deceased family member, even as it participates in a Christian ethos through the symbolic use of images from Catholic hagiography.

All of this takes place within a nostalgic, nationalistic discourse that defines the Days of the Dead as a tradition that is constantly being threatened by outside forces, particularly the American holiday of Halloween. In Teloloapan, there are those who feel that the ofrendas will eventually be wiped out by foreign customs, and that the Halloween devils wearing plastic or rubber monster masks will replace the traditional diablos.

THE FIRST *OFRENDA*

The second time I visited Teloloapan, the year before I returned there to live, I spent an evening in the company of my colleague John, Don Fidel, El Periquito, and Pablo, one of Don Fidel's nephews, who was accompanied by his wife Juanita and their infant son Pablito. El Periquito played some of the music for the dance of the *Tecuanes* on his flute and drum, and a couple of teenage boys showed us the steps to the dance. John, Pedro, Juanita and I took turns trying to learn the dance patterns, while Don Fidel laughed and urged us to take pictures.

The following summer when I returned to Teloloapan, the first thing Don Fidel asked me was, "Do you still have the pictures you took with Pablo and his family?" It turned out that Pablo, Juanita, Pablito, Pablo's brother Raimundo and a man who worked for the family delivering bread had all been murdered a few months before. Details of the incident were vague: the family had been driving late at night when they were stopped by another driver and shot; no one really knew by whom. According to rumors, the murderer was a member of the *judiciales*, one of the federal police forces, with a reputation for involvement in illegal acts of various kinds. (Later, the rumor turned out to be false. The family was murdered by a drunken man who confused Pablo with someone else, then panicked and killed the others when he realized his mistake.)

I met Doña Sofía, Don Fidel's aunt and the mother of the two slain brothers not long after. She couldn't refer to the deaths without breaking into tears. She asked Don Fidel if he would arrange the *ofrenda nueva* (new offering), for the *Día de los Difuntos* on November 1st. He agreed, but then asked his son to take over for him, as his health wasn't as good as it used to be. Fidel had never arranged an ofrenda before, but he used to help his father when he was a small child and still remembered the basics. Doña Sofía wanted an especially large one since it would be for four people, "a four-in-one," as she

said. Fidel asked if I would be willing to help him, as the ofrenda would take a couple of weeks to set up, so in mid-October, we started to work.

In Teloloapan, *ofrendas nuevas* (the offerings made the first November following a death) tend to be much more elaborate than in other parts of Mexico. One of their distinguishing characteristics is the paper *cielo* (ceiling or heaven) which covers the ceiling and walls of the space set aside for the ofrenda. The focus of the ofrenda is the altar, a table covered with a white cloth, upon which is placed a *santo* or a biblical image (the larger the better), flowers, candles, a photograph of the deceased, and small objects or miniatures that make reference to his or her occupation or pastimes. The space surrounding the altar is covered with objects, as well. Natural turf is often spread over the ground in front of the altar; pillars are placed in the corners with plants and *llorones* (white-and-gold plaster statues of young children crying), and offerings of food and candles are placed all around. Usually, the *ofrendero* also constructs a life-sized (or slightly smaller) tomb out of earth or wood and paper to represent the grave of the person being honored. The family may also make or buy a poem printed on a large piece of cardboard, that speaks of the love and respect they feel for the deceased. Recently, those families who can afford it have begun to incorporate elaborate lighting, music and video.

Many families hire an *ofrendero* to create the elaborate display required for the Days of the Dead in Teloloapan. The expense entailed can be enormous, depending on the kind of ofrenda desired, so poorer families or families with artistic ability usually make their own. Sometimes, the ofrendas are referred to as a "contest," although there is no prize involved. The "judges" are the general public who read the local newspaper the week before to find out where new ofrendas will be displayed. If an ofrenda receives good press (by word of mouth), it may be visited by hundreds of people, acquaintances and strangers alike, on the nights of October 31st and November 1st. If a family wants an

elaborate ofrenda and either can't or doesn't want to build it, an ofrendero needs to be contacted well in advance. The most well-known ofrenderos may be asked to build several ofrendas in a year, so timing is very important.

Some ofrenderos are artisans by trade, like Don Fidel and Daniel Roldán, who is known for both his devil masks and his paper maché saints. Others are members of particularly religious families, with access to many *santos* and religious images. Don Pascual, for example, owns some fifteen or twenty life-sized fiberglass saints. He has followed in his mother's footsteps: Doña Eusebia was known for her manual abilities and her religious devotion. According to Don Pascual, his mother was the originator of the tradition of using tombs made of mounds of earth surrounded by white stones or shells. She always said that a good ofrenda requires a dead person, space, money, and the will to spend it. (When she died, Don Pascual used his entire inner courtyard for her ofrenda: a representation of the Ascension of Christ, in which the cross holding the saint was actually raised up to the heavens by a rope-and-pulley system and included smoke machines, lights and music.) Still others are merely individuals with artistic ability and interest. While some women are noted for their participation in making ofrendas, most professional ofrenderos are men. Female members of bereaved families, however, often take charge of the arrangement of the altar and the flowers.

As I discovered when helping with "the four-in-one", there is a particular way to make an ofrenda in Teloloapan. Typically, the first step is the fabricating of the *cielo* or sky-heaven that should cover most of the area where the ofrenda is to be. Doña Sofía has a large semi-covered room in her house that opens onto the patio and driveway. Since the ofrenda was to be expansive, we had to make a cielo that would cover the walls and ceiling of the entire room. After consulting with his father, Fidel decided that would mean buying four hundred sheets of white bond paper to glue together, which we did,

using homemade glue made of water, flour, and lime juice. In one day, we glued together about 140 square meters of paper, twice the size of the dimensions of the room. Once dry, we rolled the paper into a large ball to give the necessary wrinkled texture, and then started to tie up fist-sized knots of paper that would complete the visual effect. In recognition of my bodily experience, my notes for that and the following days revolve around several variations of the following: "October 22, 1999: I'm really tired of paper. Pasting it, hanging it, tying it into knots. My arms ache as much as when I was practicing with the *chicote*."

One of Fidel's uncles told us that an ofrenda should be a combination of spiritual themes and the personality of the *difunto*. For example, for a competition in the school in which he teaches in Mexico City, he made an ofrenda for a colleague from Oaxaca, so he used Oaxacan traditions as the theme. Our next step, then, was choosing the religious motif for the ofrenda's central image. Doña Sofía and Fidel decided on a representation of El Calvario, the crucifixion of Christ. Don Pascual, a distant relative of Doña Sofía's, agreed to loan her his life-sized Christ, Dimas and Gestas (the latter two are the thief and murderer who were crucified with Christ) so that the scene would be realistic. He would also loan her his Virgin Mary, who would be dressed in black to represent the Madre Dolorosa, grieving for the dead (both her own and Doña Sofía's). It would be appropriate, Doña Sofía agreed, to include the Virgin, because one of the dead was a woman, and the Virgin Mary in one of her guises is always included in a woman's ofrenda.

However, after we brought the saints down from Don Pascual's house, a feat which involved making four trips with me desperately hanging on to the saint's legs which didn't fit all the way into the bed of my pick-up truck, wedging the fiberglass bodies in between my own body and the sides of the open truck as we negotiated the hills

and speed bumps between the two houses, Doña Sofía decided that four saints were too much, and that the ofrenda should just consist of Christ and the Virgin Mary. Both Fidel and Don Pascual argued that the presence of Dimas and Gestas made the scene much more realistic. Don Fidel took his son's side. The three crucifixions are the *realidad*, he said. "What does she think? That we can invent the Bible? What happened, happened, and should be represented that way. Does she want me to make a mask and put the *diablo* in the ofrenda instead of God? These are *etapas de la Biblia*, and not our own inventions." But Doña Sofía was adamant, so we made two trips back to return the extra saints. The concept was to have one ofrenda, with four *tumbas*, one for each of the difuntos. The main image would be the Christ on the cross, hung high on the wall, with the *Madre Dolorosa* facing him from the floor. The paper *cielo* would be spray-painted to represent an angry, stormy sky.

Then Don Fidel stepped in, changing Fidel's conception of a unified presentation, and creating, in effect, two ofrendas. The Virgin was placed in the center of one wall, with the tumba of Doña Sofía's daughter-in-law at her feet, and a smaller tumba for her grandson next to it. The sky behind the Virgin was painted a pacific blue. The Christ was mounted on an adjacent wall, in the center of a paper-covered hill, and the tombs of Doña Sofía's sons were placed below him. The sky behind the Christ was painted black, gray and red to represent the tempest. Although Fidel didn't agree with all of the changes—he felt the change in the color of the sky was too abrupt and that it didn't make sense to have the Virgin as the Madre Dolorosa in black if she wasn't going to be placed at the foot of the cross—he acquiesced to his father's wishes without comment. He nearly quit, however, when Doña Sofía asked someone else to arrange the lighting, and brought in other acquaintances to comment on the work. Apparently, the reason Doña Sofía had asked so many people to become involved was that she was worried the ofrenda would

not be completed on time. But the work actually seemed to be taking longer with so much help.

Then the family decided to take down the paper divider which had hidden the rest of the room from sight. We had to come up with another way to block the view, and thought of arranging plants. So we spent much of one afternoon driving around and asking friends and neighbors for the loan of palm plants, but did not have much luck. In the end, the family decided to use paper after all, so we had to spend more time gluing and hanging it.

At any rate, the ofrenda was finally completed. as we managed to cover the floor with turf and finish painting the tombs just before the first visitors came on October 31st. Traditionally, this is the day for the *difuntos chiquitos*, or the "little dead." Doña Sofía had us light up the tomb of her grandson and move the tomb of her younger son Memo to the front, so that they would participate in the ofrendas for the 31st. (Various visitors asked about Memo, since he was a grown man, but Doña Sofía said she felt he should be included as a *chiquito* because he hadn't been married.).

Some children came to the ofrendas dressed up as ("American") devils, witches, ghosts and pumpkins. In Teloloapan, children visit stores and approach people in the streets, asking for candy or money, referred to as "*mi calaverita*."[149] If they are really following tradition, they have to sing a traditional song before receiving their treats. Mexican children, unlike their American counterparts, go trick-or-treating on the 31st of October and the 1st of November.

[149] The term "calavera" in this context refers to a practice common in the colonial period in which middle and upper class Mexicans gave money or food to dependent children and the poor, who receieved these "Calaveras" or charitable offerings in representation of the dead. Charity was also seen as a means of assuring the givers' place in heaven after their deaths (Lomnitz 206: 218).

The 1st of November is the day of the main celebration, the ofrendas for the *difuntos grandes*. People started to show up in the late afternoon, bringing flowers, candles (*cera*, or "wax"), bread, fruit, and miniature objects. For Pablo, who was an engineer, his father-in-law brought a miniature drafting table, complete with skeleton architect. One of his cousins also made a miniature sound system to represent his sideline of setting up the sound for public events. For Juanita, who had a degree in tourism, her parents brought a miniature classroom with skeleton teacher, for which Doña Sofía asked me to make a little sign saying "*Licenciada en Turismo*," so that there wouldn't be any confusion. One of the cousins made a miniature bakery complete with an oven, tables, a bread mixer, racks, and trays of bread for Memo, a baker, like his parents.

By 8pm, the patio was filled with people who had come to console Doña Sofía and her husband, to pay their respects to the *difuntos*, and to admire the ofrenda. The public was impressed by the magnitude of the ofrenda, and congratulated Doña Sofía on the work. Don Pascual said that he thought it turned out well, although he didn't like the lights, and still felt it would have been more realistic and original with three crucifixions. Doña Sofía wept off and on all night, as visitors attempted to console her by appealing to her faith and the impossibility of knowing God's Divine Plan.

That night, the streets were filled with people walking from ofrenda to ofrenda. We saw several that night. One was for a *dulcero*, a friend of Don Fidel's, which was made by his adoptive nephew who lives in Mexico City. He wanted to make it unlike the typical Teloloapense ofrenda, with its paper *cielo*. Instead, he painted a mural of a man representing the candymaker with his back to the room, raising his arms to Jesus, standing in a shaded avenue which was supposed to evoke the avenues in Mexico City graveyards. The ofrenda included flowers, candles, lights, bread, incense, candy skulls, and food the difunto liked. It was a double ofrenda—the ofrendero's brother was also

killed in a fight in Mexico City. The ofrendero referred to himself as "not a typical Guerrerense with a heart full of anger and vengeance" over his brother's death. We also saw a beautiful ofrenda for a teacher. It showed the apparition of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego, with three-dimensional images. It had a *cielo*, a small hill, two written orations, lights, candles, and a model of the school at which the teacher taught in miniature, complete with a miniature version of the teacher herself in miniature. An ofrenda in Mexicapán was for a young taxi-driver, and included life-sized cardboard figures of the *difunto* being embraced by Christ, an oration, flowers, candles, lights, and food. Images of Saint Jude (San Judás Tadeo) and the Mount of Olives were also popular themes.

One ofrenda represented two miniature biblical scenes: a nativity and Cavalry (with only one figure, as Fidel noted, although there were the traditional three crosses). Another ofrenda was for "El Halcón," an acquaintance of Fidel's. He had lived above the athletic field, and used to go and talk to the families and young people who played football there. Apparently, he was usually drunk. He died from drinking too much and falling down outside, where he spent the night on the cold, wet ground and wasn't found until morning. The ofrenda was well-made, although not luxurious. It featured a miniature *corrida de toros*, because El Halcón used to like to jump into the ring during bullfights to *torrear* the bulls. He was also known for engraving rustic grave markers in the cemetery.

The last ofrenda we saw had been made for a local artisan: Don Mateo Zaragoza, who made delicate figures of fruits and flamingo's out of a balsa-like wood called *techonquelite*. The ofrenda featured several examples of this art, made in this instance by family members to honor Don Mateo; they are not full-time artisans themselves, and the

tradition "is being lost." Fidel said he felt the ofrendas that year were not as large and elaborate as they had been in the past.[150]

Many of the ofrendas were still being displayed on the 2nd, the day when people traditionally visit the cemetery. This activity is similar to the way it is done in other parts of the country. People clean and decorate the graves with flowers, then settle down to share food. In Teloloapan, there are also some professional musicians who go from grave to grave, offering to play for a few coins. That night, we went to see some more ofrendas with Doña Sofía who, for obvious reasons, hadn't been able to go the night before. She took candles from her own ofrenda. One of the men who worked for her delivering bread had been killed along with her family, but she refused to go to his ofrenda. To get to his house, she said, you have to pass by the house of the *bandido* who killed her sons. At other times, when we were forced to drive by the bandido's house with Doña Sofía, she expressed her grief and rage somatically, by falling asleep in the car.

We spent the next two weeks helping Doña Sofía return plates to those who had left ofrendas. Following the instructions of her sister Doña Antonina, we returned the plates to their owners with fruit from the ofrenda if the original offering was bread, and with bread from the ofrenda if the original offering was fruit. Doña Antonina said that many people had forgotten this custom, that now most people just returned the empty plates, and that some people just left ofrendas with disposable plates so that they wouldn't have to worry if a plate got broken or lost. But she still preferred the traditional

[150] A couple of years later, we saw an ofrenda with live actors in a biblical tableau. This custom is said to come from Iguala (see Lechuga 2002: 20). But two of the most poignant ofrendas that I saw were created in 2006, both in honor of young women. The first was for a friend of Ivonne's who had married and moved out of state some years before. In a jealous rage, her husband killed her and threw her body in a ditch. Her father spent months searching, until he was able to locate his only child, whose body he brought back to Teloloapan for burial. The other ofrenda was for a teenager who had been killed in an accident involving a drunk driver. She lived with her family in Chicago, but had come to visit relatives in Teloloapan during her vacation. Her ofrenda included all of the personal objects her parents identified with her: grade reports, an Ipod, an Arabic dance costume, disks, and a pink electric guitar.

way, so we joined other families *repartiendo los platos*, some by car, and some on foot. This task was complicated by the fact that neither Fidel nor I knew many of the people who had left offerings and, although each plate had a name written on a piece of masking tape, many of the names or addresses were illegible or incorrect. Clean, unburned candles got resold (by the kilo), at about half price.

THE DAY OF THE DEAD IN MEXICO

> The word death is not pronounced in New York, in Paris, in London, because it burns the lips. The Mexican, in contrast, is familiar with death, jokes about it, caresses it, sleeps with it, celebrates it; it is one of his favorite toys and his most steadfast love. True, there is perhaps as much fear in his attitude as in that of others, but at least death is not hidden away: he looks at it face to face, with impatience, disdain or irony. "If they are going to kill me tomorrow, let them kill me right away" (Paz 1985: 57-58).

Both Mexicans and non-Mexicans share the belief that few holidays are as uniquely Mexican as the *Días de los Muertos*. Although elements of the Spanish Catholic tradition are recognized, many assume that the celebration is rooted in prehispanic death rituals. This belief is bolstered by much popular and anthropological writing on the subject (see Nutini 188, Dufétel 2002) and accompanied by a kind of nostalgia for what is perceived as the loss of authentic tradition in the face of foreign cultural imperialism.

The official Roman Catholic celebration is limited to the observance of special masses on November 1st (All Saints Day) and November 2nd (All Souls Day)[151]. Official activities, therefore, are marginal to most Mexicans' participation in the Days of the Dead. The importance of the holiday lies not in its place in the liturgical calendar, but in its relevance to the lives of its participants and its role as a locus of national (and local)

[151] See Nutini (1988) for a discussion of the relationship between the spirits of the dead and the pantheon of Catholic saints.

identity. “Most observers would agree, ironically, that Mass in Mexico is the least-salient part of the holiday” (Brandes 1998: 360).

As we saw in the last chapter, their country’s past as one of the most important ways in which Mexicans differentiate themselves from others. It is not surprising, then, that many Mexicans emphasize the indigenous (prehispanic) elements of the ofrendas instead of its European heritage; typically cited in this indigenist discourse are the inclusion of bread (*pan de muerto*), sugar skulls, marigolds (cempoaxuchitl), and incense in the offerings. Authors such as de Orellana (2002) and Carmichael and Sayers (1991) posit a prehispanic base for the ofrendas, even when they admit that the historical links are difficult to prove.

The prehispanic Nahuas of what is now central Mexico made offerings to the dead on various dates throughout the year, depending on the manner of their deaths. During *Tlaxochimaco*, the ninth month of the Aztec calendar, the Nahuas celebrated *Maccaihuitontli*, when offerings were made to children who had died, the souls of whom were represented by flowers. During *Xocotl Uetzi*, the tenth month, they celebrated *Hueymiccaihuitl*, making offerings to deceased adults. The spirits of those who died in water or were killed by lightening went to the afterworld dedicated to the rain deity Tlaloc and were remembered during the month of *Tepeilhuitl*. In 1521, the year of the Conquest, the Catholic All Souls and All Saints coincided with the Nahuatl celebration of *Quecholli*, a festival to honor men killed in battle and women dead in childbirth, whose spirits would accompany the sun in its ascension, then return to the earth in the form of butterflies and hummingbirds (Dufétel 2002).[152] In all of these festivals, offerings of

[152] Some indigenous groups today continue to make offerings on different days for people who have died different kinds of deaths. Nutini reports that in rural Tlaxcala, indigenous communities remember those who died in accidents on the 28th of October, those who died violently on the 29th of October, infants on the 30th of October, children on the 31st of October, adults on the 1st of November, and the dead in general on the 2nd of November (1988). In the indigenous regions of Guerrero, particularly the Montaña, similar

food, flowers and personal objects played an important role. But it would be oversimplifying to conclude that contemporary Mexican offerings are therefore vestiges of prehispanic tradition, as food has long been a part of Catholic offerings to the dead, as well. Brandes argues that what is distinctively Mexican about the ofrenda is the incorporation of figures made of sugar, linked to the idea that death is sweet, but also derived from economic forces having to do with the production of sugar in the colonial period, which happened to accompany an increase in mortality rates (1997: 294).

In what is probably the most complete study of death in Mexico, Claudio Lomnitz links the rise of the celebration of the days of the dead to the need to administer the deaths of the faithful after the Conquest. He argues that the concept of purgatory, where the dead go for a time after death, was a key factor in this process, linking all classes of Mexican society in a common community, and that "toward the end of the seventeenth-century [the idea of purgatory] began to provide a language of justice and organic interdependence between the dead and the living, between the upper and lower classes and between parents and children" (2006: 219). Death, then, was "the great equalizer" and the Church stressed the idea that souls in purgatory were "the poorest of the poor," standing in relation to the living lower classes as these did to the living upper classes (217).

Colonial elite altars were elaborate, and often formed part of family chapels, while indigenous ofrendas combined prehispanic and Catholic elements. "The items on the home altars formed a mixture, not a syncretic mosaic, of religions. Pre-Catholic use of flowers, colors, and tobacco offerings continued side by side with candles, saints and crucifixes" (Beezley 1997: 92; see also Turok 2002). The church alternately discouraged

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principles apply. But in Teloloapan, the only division is between the *chiquitos* who are remembered on the 31st of October, and the *grandes*, whose day is the 1st of November. See also El Guindi 1977 for a similar classification among the Zapotecs.

home altars as bastions of pagan idolatry and encouraged their use as a means of "bringing Catholicism into the home" (ibid. 93). With the increased presence of printing and lithography in the late nineteenth-century, professionally printed cards and images gained a larger place in home altars. Some of these cards included orations in both Spanish and Nahuatl, indicating their use by creoles, mestizos and indigenous Mexicans (ibid. 99). In the twentieth century, these changes in the objects displayed in ofrendas increased, and ofrenderos began to incorporate photographs and commercial items like cigarettes and artistically-arranged crepe paper.

Beezley argues that domestic devotional practices, including the making of ofrendas and the use of home altars, increased dramatically as a result of the secularization that took place in the nineteenth century, when official Church activities were severely curtailed, particularly after the consolidation of the Mexican liberal state (ibid.). However, according to Lomnitz, funeral rituals had begun to be domesticated before the eighteenth-century as a means of: conserving practices which were not wholly condoned by the official Church, avoiding taxes and church tithes, and demonstrating devotion and family solidarity (2006: 222).

Some writers have focused on the difference between the celebration of the Days of the Dead in the country and in the city. According to de Orellana, "the urban festival has been denuded of religiosity" although its artistic elements may continue to be very elaborate. She contrasts the "serenity" of the celebration in the country with the "games and fun" which characterize it in the city (2002: 9). Like de Orellana, Turok also bemoans the loss of ritual and the sacred in urban ofrendas, claiming that the cult of death has been turned into spectacle, even as she celebrates their importance as sites of popular artistic expression (2002: 54).

Teloloapan seems to occupy an in-between space between city and country: despite the prominence of commercially produced goods in contemporary ofrendas in Teloloapan, popular discourse continues to privilege the ofrendas' indigenous roots, leaping over three hundred years of colonial history, and the subsequent two hundred years of independent Mexico. But, as Brandes writes, "what is of main interest here is not…the actual historical derivation of the Day of the Dead but rather its *attributed* derivation and connection to Mexico" (1998: 364).

The ofrenda is perceived as a vanishing practice, whose traditional values are being threatened by the forces of modernity, which are represented by store-bought objects and, more insidiously, the importation of the American holiday of Halloween. As Brandes writes, "Mexicans who resent the growing U.S. influence over the Mexican economy and culture scene respond effectively by focusing on a concrete, discretely defined event like Halloween. Halloween's success, to these Mexicans, represents Mexico's failure" (1998: 378).[153]

For some years, the ofrendas have also been constructed in a new context: the public contest held in schools, plazas and government buildings. These contests have arisen for two reasons: as a means of commemorating public figures who have died, and as a means of resurrecting what may be seen as a dying tradition. Lomnitz dates the "explosion of the imaginary of death in the public sphere" (2006: 254) to the end of the eighteenth-century, when the "religious superstition" of the baroque age began to be perceived as one of the causes of Mexico's lack of economic competitivity with European markets. Death began to be viewed as a social, rather than religious, problem.

[153] See Turner and Jasper (1988) for a discussion of the functions of the Days of the Dead among Mexican American communities in Texas. The authors argue that, just as it is for Mexicans who resist the forces of cultural capitalism, the celebration of the dead in minority Mexican communities in the U.S. is a means of maintaining identity in the face of the majority pressure to conform.

Public discourse about death became a way to express popular opinion about political figures and current events, and a means of celebrating the rebirth of the state after the Independence movement. In the twentieth-century, after a civil war in which an estimated one million citizens were killed, Mexican artists and intellectuals converted attitudes toward death and the practices surrounding the care of the dead into key aspects of *lo mexicano*; by the 1960's, the days of the dead were considered "*algo muy nuestro*," typically Mexican. Ironically, this was also the decade that saw the rise of Halloween in Mexico, which in some quarters, was accompanied by strong anti-U.S. sentiment. As Lomnitz writes,

> Sentiments and attitudes toward death had been slowly constructed as national, as typically Mexican, and now they were being endangered by a new and particularly intrusive and pernicious form of commercialism, which served the interests of U.S. capital and its representatives within the country (ibid. 415).

In an episode of *Voces de la Ciudad* dedicated to the ofrendas, Don Francisco Nájera, chronicler of Teloloapan, compared Halloween and the Mexican Days of the Dead. Halloween, he argued, is a *costumbre extranjera*, an invasion from the United States. He said, "they treat everything as a joke," while "we aren't joking when we honor our dead." Children are influenced by consumerism; they see costumes for sale in the shops and want to dress up for Halloween. But those *diablos gringos* don't look like our diablos. Halloween, he concluded, is "a *gringo*-style commemoration that shouldn't affect us in any way."

For this reason, those involved in the construction of the discourse on the days of the dead stressed the prehispanic roots of the ofrendas as a means of distancing them from western influence. As a judge at several ofrenda contests in Teloloapan and in Tixtla, where I work, I have been expected to award more points to "traditional" ofrendas, uncontaminated by modernity, which may not represent the way Teloloapenses

and Tixtlecos really create ofrendas for the dead in their homes. But the discourse of purity and tradition that dominates public ofrenda contests is at odds with the practice of making domestic ofrendas, particularly in Teloloapan, where the most praised ofrendas are often the most technologically and visually elaborate, the ones that rely the most on objects representative of late modernity: lights, sound systems, neon spray paint, and commercial paper. And, for the time being, the *ofrendas* and Halloween continue to exist, and flourish, side by side in Teloloapan.[154]

LA SANTÍSIMA MUERTE

The recent surge in popularity of *La Santísima Muerte* is evidence of the continued importance of discourses surrounding death in Mexico. Some believe the cult has prehispanic origins, while others point to the worship of San Pascual (represented as a skeleton) in Guatemala and Chiapas. Whatever its origins, *la Santísima Muerte* became then linked to pacts with the devil and worshipped by police and drug dealers (both groups often perceived as members of the criminal class), during the last quarter of the twentieth century. The "saint" now has a widespread fan base among Mexico's working class. Although the Catholic has recently taken steps to prohibit or control the cult, it has not had very much success. Lomnitz concludes that

> In these vast 'margins' of Mexico, globalization has dissociated the power of death from the power of the State. These days, the State is no longer the absolute symbol of sovereignty, at least in the imaginations of many. Even God is a bit remote for the *narcos* and for the markedly hybrid popular urban groups who must live on the margins of legality. For them, Death is the best representative of sovereignty, and it is with death that many people decide to negotiate their daily existence (ibid. 469).

[154] Brandes notes that, just as Halloween has become part of the Mexican culture landscape, the Day of the Dead is becoming an increasingly visible symbol of "ethnic practice" in the U.S., as witnessed by its increasing display in museum exhibits and other forms of representation (1998: 371).

Although this cult has been most popular in urban settings, I saw figures and amulets being sold in Teloloapan for the first time during the fiestas patrias of 2008. It remains to be seen whether the cult will gain a foothold in southern Mexico, as it has in the Federal District and the north.

DO THE DEAD REALLY RETURN?

Every October, the Mexican government sponsors advertisements on television that promote the tradition of the *Días de los Muertos*. In 1999, this consisted of a promotional spot announcing "*Día de los Muertos: Una Tradición Llena de Vida*," or "Day of the Dead: A Tradition that is Filled with Life." It featured an elderly couple, recently deceased, enjoying the food and drinks of their ofrenda, a reference to the belief that the dead return to enjoy what the living have offered them. This belief stems from the Catholic dogma of purgatory, where the dead dwell until they have paid for their sins or their relatives have freed them through prayer. At least in "urban" Teloloapan, this belief is not as universally held as it may once have been. Many people question whether or not the dead really return, stating that "they say they dead really come back" instead of "the dead really come back." Even so, ofrendas continue to be created, with paths of cempoaxuchitl and candles, so that the dead may find their way home.

It is said that the dead can only partake of the aroma of their offering—its essence, not its material form. This is one of the reasons why flowers are such an important part of the ofrenda. So, on the 2nd of November, when humans are finally allowed to eat the bread, fruit and other delicacies that make up the offering, the food has lost its taste. Fidel and Aurora's memories of the ofrendas of their childhood center on

the pleasures of illicitly sampling the offering before they were allowed to by their parents, when it still tasted good.

In 1999, a commemorative magazine published in Teloloapan printed a well-known story about Colotepeque, a young man from the nearby town of Tianquizolco, who had last his parents in an epidemic called *el mal de la chiva*, and doubted that the dead really do return. The anonymous author writes,

> Colotepeque did not believe anything people said about "the dead returning;" he thought that death was the end, and that was that. But a macabre idea was forming in his head: he wanted to see for himself if the dead really did come out of their tombs and return to their homes to eat the ofrenda…
>
> On the afternoon of the 31st of October, he left his house and went to the Cemetery in Teloloapan, and when it got dark, he climbed a tree he had seen earlier. From there, he would see when the dead left their tombs to go to the world of the living. He waited patiently, as he had heard that the best hour would be twelve o'clock, midnight, before the 1st of November. He thought to himself that now he would know the truth about what he had been told.
>
> When midnight came, all of his senses alert, he saw suddenly that the cemetery lit up and from the tombs, the dead began to come out. When he experienced that vision, he shivered and felt a grand emotion, seeing how each *muerto* carried their pieces of candle, some of which were thick, others thin, and suddenly, something shook him, and he felt a deep pain in his heart. He saw his mother and father carrying just stumps of candles, and pieces of *ocote*, burning their hands.
>
> His eyes filled with tears, and he suddenly wanted to get out of the tree and run to his parents, embrace them and beg their forgiveness on his knees for what he had unconsciously done. But he couldn't even move; he felt nailed to the tree, and Colotepeque lost consciousness. Not until morning, when the sun was just raising above the horizon, was he able to descend from the tree and go home.
>
> As he was walking back to Tianquizolco, on the royal road he came across his neighbors carrying flowers to the graves of their dead. But Colotepeque moved like a sleepwalker, and, although those he met greeted him, he did not reply. When he got back to his house, he got into bed, and his temperature rose above 103 degrees. He became delirious, calling for his parents to forgive him and yelling that he wanted to be with them. Y Colotepeque died mysteriously; no doctor could detect the cause of his death. And so this story of a non-believer who

> wanted to find out for himself about the return of the dead to the land of the living, comes to an end. His death was much talked about by *lugareños*, each one coming to his own conclusions (*La Tecampanera* 1999: 20; see also Lechuga 2002: 20).

This cautionary tale seems to be directed, not only at unbelievers, but also to those who do not uphold the tradition of the ofrendas, collaborating in its decline in the face of "modernity." It is a ghost story, like many others told in Teloloapan about black bulls appearing at midnight in haunted houses, women in white appearing near water and at crossroads, and mysterious lights marking the location of buried treasure. These uncanny tales, says Ivy, "domesticate the fear of ghosts by narrativizing them. In this sense they take care of the excess that memorialization cannot subsume….an alternate way of talking about death" (195: 168). But whether they believe the literal truth or not, however, the return of the dead is part of the imaginary of the ofrendas in Teloloapan, and the creation of an offering signifies making a place for them in the world of the living. Many, including Don Fidel, take the sentiments of the story of Colotepeque to heart, and leave a single candle burning outside their doors, for the *ánima sola*, the spirit who has no one.

THE DEATH OF DON FIDEL

The majority of scholarly works on Mexican ofrendas centers around tradition, links to the past, and ritual practice. These writings tend to give the impression of being far removed from the reality of death, from the interplay of grief and memory that death occasions in those whose lives have been touched by loss

My field notes of March 23rd, 2000 read: Don Fidel is in the hospital. He managed to get here last night around 11pm ("*arrastrándose*," Fidel says), and Fidel took him to the *sanatorio*. He has water in his lungs and a clogged artery, and he's probably going to

need an operation. Alicia is looking into taking him to Mexico City having her social security pay for the surgery. Fidel stayed with him in the hospital last night, and I brought him his cinnamon tea and cookies this morning.

I have no more notes until April 7th: Don Fidel died on March 24th around 4pm. Fidel and I were with him, and he was supposed to be coming home from the hospital that afternoon. The doctor said he had a blocked heart valve and would need an operation in Mexico, but that he would survive. He had been complaining of nausea throughout the day and had been unable to eat anything. The doctor gave him an electrocardiogram, said everything was normal, and prescribed a medicine to be added to his IV bag. Not long after the new medicine entered his system, Don Fidel began complaining that he didn't feel well. The doctor said to stay calm, that his reaction was normal and would pass. But the pain got worse and Don Fidel begged the doctor to stop the medicine. He was sitting up, supported by Fidel. The doctor stopped the IV, saying that it was just for a little while so that don Fidel could rest. But shortly after, he slipped sidewise, and his eyes closed. The doctor worked on him for about 20 minutes, but it was too late to counter the effects of the massive heart attack he had suffered.

Dealing with Death

What I really remember about the days in between the death of Don Fidel on March 24th and April 7th, when I was able to write about it, is incessant activity: prepare the body, buy the coffin, inform the people, arrange the food, the prayers…

While Ivonne and I, helped by Alonso and Fidel's aunt Francisca among others, emptied and cleaned the main room in Don Fidel's house, Fidel and Aurora brought the body home from the hospital. I was asked to gather up some earth and a brick. They laid the body on the floor in the kitchen to dress it for the burial. One of Fidel's nephews was

distraught, and threw himself over the corpse. Fidel, angry with the doctor, cried that they killed his father. The aunts and uncles took over, asking us to find clean clothes (no shoes), which we did, and they dressed Don Fidel. Fidel and his older sister Aurora kissed his feet so that they would be at peace with their father's spirit; Aurora, particularly, had not been getting along very well with Don Fidel. Fidel's uncle Alberto shaped the earth in the form of a cross on the floor of the main room and placed the brick at the head. They sprinkled the sand with holy water, which one of the relatives had on hand, and the body was laid on top to be "received by the earth," with Don Fidel's head resting on the brick. I went with Fidel and two of his relatives to buy the coffin. Fidel selected one made of caoba, which cost over nine hundred dollars. The coffin came with four candle holders, two vases, and the loan of a lighted cross. When we got back to the house, the body was lifted off the floor and placed in the coffin, which was positioned on a stand over the sand cross. Relatives and friends started coming right away to view the body (which is something I've never been comfortable with). Viewing the body is supposed to confront the living with the finality of death; however, there were several relatives who were concerned that, because it all happened so suddenly, Don Fidel wasn't really dead, or that his death was caused by witchcraft, motivated by *envidia*. This is what is called the "second kind of death," where the person is still alive, although dead in appearance. To find out if this was the case, they put an onion dipped in oregano in his navel, which is supposed to make the "dead" person react. One of the uncles also bent back Don Fidel's finger (breaking it, I think) to make him react, but he didn't. Fidel had had enough at this point, and shouted at everyone to leave his father's body in peace. They finally called in a local doctor, who used a mirror to determine that there was no breath, and that Don Fidel was really dead.

We spent the night *velando* the corpse. Several of the relatives stayed until twelve or one in the morning, and then came back around dawn. Fidel and Aurora slept a little, but someone was always with the body. One young man (a diablo), drunk, wailed loudly for his "*abuelito*" not to leave him, and hung over the coffin until Fidel convinced him to sit down outside. We served coffee and bread (donated by Doña Sofía). The following day, Ivonne and Aurora set up the altar, a wooden table covered with a white, embroidered cloth. They put flowers and candles on top, and hung a picture of the *Virgen Dolorosa* and a crucifix above the altar. In the morning TVT (the local television station) announced his death and showed a few video clips that featured Don Fidel.

Later that afternoon, they celebrated the mass (*misa del cuerpo presente*) in the church of the Asunción and the burial in the cemetery (Don Fidel had not, it turns out, sold the whole plot). A group of devils accompanied the coffin during the mass, taking off their masks inside the church. First, there was a group of boys, then older boys, finally the veteran devils took their turn as escorts. TVT filmed, as well. After the mass, the body was paraded around the zócalo, still accompanied by devils, and [a local television announcer] gave a moving speech, ending by pointing to Fidel as the successor to the devil tradition. The trumpet player played the *toque de silencio* that is usually reserved for civic events. The parade then went on to the cemetery (and a few boys on the sidelines were wearing their masks to honor Don Fidel), where the body was buried (after some difficulty, because the coffin didn't fit into the hole they had dug). La Araña (one of the diablos) saluted Don Fidel by cracking his chicote an inordinate number of times. Fidel had to remove the bones of another man (unknown) and a child to whom Don Fidel had loaned his space in the graveyard. He reburied those remains underneath the grave marker he had commissioned to be placed at the foot of the tomb, a stone engraved with a

drawing of Christ that represents another "dying art" in Teloloapan—only one person can still do them (the son of El Halcón, whose ofrenda we had visited the year before).

We made it back to the house barely in time for the first of nine nights of prayers, conducted by Alberto's wife Marisa. There was very little time to think, because there were so many details to organize. The family was responsible for providing food and drink to those who had accompanied them in the prayers (the house and the street in front had been full of people, as had the church during the mass). On Sunday, we went to buy all the supplies we would need—eggnog, sherry, milk and coffee, among other things. Cookies, bread, *atole* and tamales were donated by other relatives. My duties consisted of making sure the amplifier was working for the *rezandera*, and helping *repartir* the food after the prayer. The prayers went on for nine nights and we had to provide something different for the attendees every night so that they wouldn't get bored. Also, the family wanted to make sure that no one criticized the presentation. Fidel and I stayed in the house for those nine days because the *sombra* (shadow, or soul of the dead person, which is said to reside in the earthen cross upon which the body had lain)[155] isn't supposed to be left alone. And the candles had to stay lit all the time.

One week after Don Fidel's death, we stayed up all night again to *velar la sombra*, which would be taken to the cemetery the next day. Each night, Aurora added flowers to the mound of earth. She started out covering the drying flowers from the night before with new ones, but one of the aunts said she should remove and save the dried flowers, and just put down fresh ones from the flowers donated. All the dried flowers and flower parts had to be saved in a plastic bag and taken to the cemetery to be placed on the grave. Aurora said that she and Fidel had never learned all of the details of the rituals

[155] See El Guindi (1977) for a discussion of the Zapotec corporeal imaginary, in which the human is said to be divided into three parts: body, soul and tono (animal spirit), a belief also common in the Costa Chica of Guererro (see Dehouve 1994: 155). The sombra is something like the detachable soul.

involved when someone dies, but like everyone else, had just gone to the rezos and commented on or criticized the way things were done. But now they were being forced to learn. That night, people also brought offerings, just like in November: plates of fruit or bread.

Earlier, we had put mossy earth on the ground and pictures of Don Fidel on the altar. One was a picture he had taken precisely for this reason (it seems that when many people die, the family doesn't have an appropriate photo, and have to cut up a group shot or make a photo from a video, as was the case of Doña Sofía's son Pablo in the November ofrenda), and the other was one I had taken of him working on a mask. Fidel also put the last two Cokes that Don Fidel bought before he went to the hospital (one of which he had opened) next to his picture. Later, he added a cup of cinnamon tea and the cookies that Don Fidel had liked. Just like in November, we had to write down all the names and addresses of people who brought plates, in order to be able to return them later.

Around 4pm on the day of the *velación*, we also welcomed the cross and special candles (three feet long, adorned by artificial purple flowers) brought by their respective *padrinos*. The cross was made of iron so that it would last, although wooden ones are considered to be more traditional and may later be replaced by iron crosses. Don Fidel's cousins Alberto and Martina sponsored the cross, and his neighbors Mario and Sandra sponsored the candles. They were carried up the street and met halfway by the family and others carrying lit candles. When they reached the house, Anselmo Vásquez (a neighbor and government functionary) gave a speech on behalf of the padrinos, and another representative thanked them on behalf of the family. The cross was then placed above the sombra, blessed, and sprinkled with holy water. Then Marisa conducted the prayers at 8pm as usual. She prayed another rosary at 10:30, and then again at midnight.

The next afternoon, the family offered turkey with mole to those who had accompanied them in the *velación*, and after the meal, the *levantada de la sombra* took place. The old flowers were removed, and the sombra was covered with fresh white flowers, along with red flowers placed in the center and points of the cross. The padrinos knelt by the side of the sombra, and the *rezandero* (not Marisa – this requires someone with specific experience) explained what they were to do as he recited five Our Father's, each one followed by ten Hail Mary's. Each padrino and madrina was responsible for taking up a part of the cross. At the beginning of each Our Father, the padrino would pick up the red flower that corresponded to his or her part, then pick up the corresponding white flowers as the rezandor recited the Hail Mary's. Then the process was repeated with the earth underneath the flowers, and finally, the earth that remained was swept up by a special twig broom. Everything was put into a box to be taken to the cemetery.

There was a slight disturbance (caught forever on videotape) when Don Fidel's cousin Doña Soraya, one of the legal owners of the house, was nearly strangled by his other cousin Francisca. Doña Soraya and Don Fidel had never gotten along very well, both being "*de carácteres fuertes*." Her brother Lucas had given Don Fidel permission to live in the house for as long as he wished to, but Soraya had always wanted the house for herself. Most of their relatives were on Don Fidel's side, and Francisca in particular felt that Soraya's presence during the la *levantada de la sombra* was in bad taste. But eventually things calmed down, and we all walked to the graveyard, where the flowers that had been given to the family during the last week were placed on the grave. The brick upon which Don Fidel's head had rested was buried at the foot of the gravestone, along with the broom; and the sombra, both earth and flowers, were scattered over it. The cross was cemented on top of the tomb, and the candles were burned for a little while. Marisa recited a rosary, and then we returned to Don Fidel's house. Before the

penultimate rosary, Aurora and Fidel formally thanked the padrinos in the kitchen, washing their hands and passing burning incense over them to purify them. After the prayers, the padrinos were offered a light dinner.

Sunday morning at seven, another mass was held in Don Fidel's name (although the priest didn't mention him because he said he couldn't find Aurora to ask her the specific information). The church was full of mourners, even though it was the day of the change to Daylight Savings Time, and many people were confused about what time the mass was to start. That night was the final night of the rosary; before they began, a teacher who had lived up the street from Don Fidel (known for her public speaking abilities) thanked all of the people who had accompanied the family for their presence. She spoke very eloquently about how difficult it is to lose loved ones, and how we have to go on living even though life is so fragile.

Monday, we took down everything that hadn't been taken down the day before and began the task of returning the plates that had held ofrendas. In the afternoon, we went back to the cemetery to visit Don Fidel's grave, as Monday is the day that Teloloapenses traditionally visit the graveyard. Referring to his tomb, Fidel said, "His new house is in the center of the cemetery, just as his old house was in the center of town. Never rich, but always famous." He decided to put Don Fidel's front room, which he had always used as his workshop, back exactly the way it was, with workbench, tools, masks and photographs in their proper places.

That same afternoon, just as I was sitting down to try and bring my field notes up to date, a middle-aged couple, obviously *gente humilde*, came to the door. The woman said that an acquaintance of hers mentioned that I spoke English, and asked if I would translate a letter for them that had just arrived from the United States. The letter turned out to be from the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office. Their son Ignacio had recently

been killed in a fight while living and working without papers in California. The letter listed the personal property found on his body and included a form for them to sign to be able to claim it, which I helped them fill out. Ignacio's parents would have his picture, a candle burning and a few objects to remember him by. They would make an *ofrenda nueva* in November. But I wondered what happened to his sombra so far from home and family, with no one to make sure it was laid to rest along with his body? Talking about the incident later, Fidel remarked that perhaps Don Fidel returned to Teloloapan from Mexico City because he was afraid of dying alone and far away.

The *Ofrenda*

In later years, a *difunto* will be remembered with a picture, perhaps a burning candle, a simple offering during the Días de los Muertos and on the anniversary of his or her death, but in Teloloapan, the first year is special. The nine nights after a family member dies, the *ofrenda nueva* in November, and the novena of the first anniversary (the *cabo de año*) of the death are times of intense work and expense for the family. Don Fidel had an image in his kitchen—a small poster mounted on a wooden backing—of the Holy Trinity: Christ on the cross with a white dove spreading its wings across his chest to represent the Holy Spirit, and a grandfatherly God the Father opening his arms wide and looking down on his Son. After Don Fidel died, he decided that the Holy Trinity would be the perfect theme for his ofrenda. He would make it larger than life, filling Don Fidel's former workshop with the offering of a son for his father.

Ivonne and Aurora's son Hoguer copied the image from the poster onto a large piece of stiff cloth, enlarging it to cover one wall of Don Fidel's front room. Fidel wanted the Christ to be three-dimensional, but Don Pascual had already lent the one we used in

Doña Sofía's ofrenda to some relatives from Ixcateopan, "who asked for it much earlier," he told us sternly. He would, however, lend us Dimas and Gestas so that we could represent El Calvario in its entirety. Two of Fidel's aunts had Cristos, but they were much smaller than Don Pascual's santos, so he decided to make the figure out of paper maché, using stacks of newspapers Don Fidel had saved (in part for the images of nude women they contained). After a discussion about Christ's skin tone ("Isn't he *más güero*?" asked Ivonne. "No," I answered, "they just paint him that way."), Fidel gave him eyes made out of blue marbles, and used red acrylic paint for the blood. We tried with fake vampire blood left over from Halloween, but it was too difficult to see after it dried.

Again, the *cielo* was formed of sheets of white paper (pasted together, thankfully, by Aurora's two teen-aged daughters) and painted to represent a stormy sky. The Christ figure was placed a little higher than the other two, with sheets of paper forming a hollow hill that covered the base of the cross and the benches that had been lashed together to support it.

On the other side of the room, in a kind of infernal mirroring of the divine Father and Son, Fidel placed a life-sized skeleton (also drawn by Ivonne and Hoguer) which represented Don Fidel in death, his arms outstretched. On a table below the skeleton, he arranged a group of miniature diablos, Don Fidel's "children," and in front of this, facing the skeleton, his own self-portrait: a mannequin dressed as a diablo, wearing the mask from the contest Don Fidel had not lived to see.[156]

Don Fidel's nephew Mauricio provided the mossy earth for the floor-covering (it had been left over from another ofrenda), and Fidel's godmother Doña Luisa took care of

[156] Among the Afromestizo populations of the coasts of Guerrero and Oaxaca, the *Danza de los diablos* is performed during the Days of the Dead as a means of scaring away wandering spirits. This practice is common in various regions, as part of celebrations of the harvest or Carnival (Lomnitz 2006: 249) and also appears to have been the original function of dressing up for Halloween (see Brandes 1998: 379).

the *soneto* and the flowers. We constructed a tomb out of Styrofoam, which we painted black and used as a base for Don Fidel's photograph and the soneto. Touches of florescent yellow paint were added to strategic parts of the ofrenda, like the beams of glory surrounding God the Father, the *calaca*'s bones and Christ's last words, and black lights reinforced the visual effect. We put a television off to one side and replayed the videotape of the interview my colleague John and I had done with Don Fidel in 1998.

When it was finished, the ofrenda was overwhelming; in an explosion of excess (which reminded me of the diablo aesthetic), it mixed the gigantic with the miniature, the sacred with the profane, traditional materials and modern media. There was no way to see all of it from one vantage point. When she saw it, Doña Antonina sighed and said, "When I die, just roll me up in a *petate* and toss me in a hole."

The ofrenda was one of the most visited in Teloloapan that year, in part because Don Fidel was known by everyone, and in part because word had gotten out that it was worth seeing. The line to get in stretched all the way down the block. An honor guard of masked diablos stayed outside the house almost all night. Aurora served hot punch to the visitors, but it ran out much faster than anticipated. The next Saturday, as is custom, *Voces de la Ciudad* showed images of the best ofrendas. The commentators spent some time talking about Don Fidel's ofrenda, mentioning how creative it was, and how interesting it was that Fidel would have included a *chusca* (morbidly droll) figure like the traditional Mexican skeleton.

Normally, the ephemeral ofrenda is completely removed after November 2nd, unless the one-year anniversary is very soon after. But Fidel decided to leave the image of God the Father on the wall until March, when Don Fidel would complete the *cabo de año* of his death. Thus, we lived in the house for months with traces of the ofrenda, and it

wasn't until April that Don Fidel's workshop returned to its original, pre-ofrenda state, albeit with one glaring absence.

The Ofrenda of Don Fidel

REZOS, A MONTAGE

May 10, 2000: More rezos, this time for Maestro Eliseo on the corner, who accompanied us during the rezos for Don Fidel. Commentary: "You never know who's

going to be next." The process was the same as it was for Don Fidel, although the cross was the more traditional wood. Fidel said it was one tradition he was glad he didn't follow, because iron lasts much longer, and wood eventually disappears. The memory with it? The wooden crosses of his little brothers have long since disappeared, and there's nothing to mark their graves, no memory or commemoration of their existence. His cousin commented to me in the cemetery that the tombs are the "real houses." Those chosen to speak on behalf of the family have "*lengua*" or ability with words. The person chosen by the relatives of Elías was Marcial, who referred to the Catholic religion as "our inheritance from our ancestors," and spoke of the intransigence of life.

July 18, 2000: We went to the anniversary of the rezos for Fidel's cousins. Not many people showed up for the first night. There were 5 rezanderas who were part of a Catholic sisterhood. Doña María asked them to come because she wanted music since one of her sons had loved music. They sang in between the prayers. One of the rezanderas exhorted those accompanying the family to pray more slowly, instead of "*a la carrera*," and to really feel the prayers. This annoyed Fidel, who then only prayed silently. He said they exaggerated the slowness and that people should be able to pray the way they want to. Aurora later told us they did the same thing the next night; she says she knows people sometimes pray too fast, but that the rezanderas didn't need to "scold."

July 19, 2000: We went to the rezos for a local politician's sister. She died two days ago, it is rumored that she had AIDS. Her husband had contracted it in the U.S. and then infected his wife. He died 3 years ago. Aurora was one of her *comadres*; she told us that the family had more or less kept it a secret. She had gotten sick in September, then recovered, then got sick in June, and couldn't get better. Aurora said that her comadre would have died all over again if she had seen the shabbiness of the arrangements. "They couldn't even get a little speaker for the *rezandera*?"

July 26, 2000: We went back to the rezos of Fidel's cousins last night. It was the *velación*, and even more elaborate than before. Before the rezo began, and after it was over, a group of musicians played keyboard music. The whole sisterhood came to sing this time. The yard was filled with people. But his time, as it was the night that people brought ofrendas, Fidel's aunt Antonina put the offerings in from of the altar but gave back the plates right away. And other plates were given as *recuerdos*: it is tradition at the last night of the *cabo de año* to give a souvenir to those who have faithfully accompanied the family during the novena. For Don Fidel, we gave a ceramic figure of Christ. The rezo lasted a long time, because of the cantos, and because the rezanderas prayed very slowly again, although they didn't exhort the rest of us not to race through the prayers.

August 7, 2000: Tonight we went to the rezos of Doña Rosa across the street, which was very different. There were very few people there, to begin with (and it wasn't even the first night). According to one man, this was because, although the difunta knew a lot of people in Teloloapan (her family had brought her back from México so that she could die here), her sons were "bad." He, as a young boy, watched one of them shoot someone in this very street.

*October 18, 2000***:** Another case of violence and alcohol: the man in charge of the cemetery was shot and killed the other day. According to the Iguala newspaper, he had been drinking with a neighbor and got offended when the neighbor refused to give him money for more beer. He pulled a knife, and the neighbor pulled out his gun to defend himself. When the *panteonero* ran for his house, the neighbor shot him in the mouth.

We went to the rezos twice because, although Fidel didn't know him very well, he says he was very nice and helpful when we buried Don Fidel. At the rezos, the deceased man's wife explained to some of the women accompanying her that the newspaper had got it all wrong. What had happened was that her husband was drinking with some

friends in his own house, when they heard shots outside – one of the neighbors, who had also been drinking, was firing his pistol. Her husband went outside to ask him to stop, but the neighbor shot him instead, twice: once in the nose and once in the mouth. One of her sons forced the neighbor back into his own house and bolted the door. The neighbor broke a window with his hand so that he could keep shooting (that's how he got cut, although he blames the difunto for attacking him with a knife). They called the police to come get the neighbor, and he was taken to the local jail. Soon afterwards, a taxi showed up at the neighbor's house (apparently, the neighbor was going to try and escape). It seems there is some question about whether the neighbor will be let out of jail on bond (for a considerable sum, but the women agreed that with money, anything was possible). The difunto's wife said that she and her sons had told the authorities that they (the authorities) would be responsible if something happened to the neighbor after being let out of jail.

We saw the sons of the difunto in the cemetery. Naturally, they seem very sad. The wife recognized Fidel as Don Fidel's son, and she explained to her friends and comadres that he was the son of the man who had been in charge of the diablos, who had died earlier in the year. She asked him if the tradition would continue. Outside the house, in the street, where the *panteonero* died, they put his sombra, and surrounded it with veladoras. There is also the traditional sombra in the house in front of the altar. Fidel says that it's normal to have two sombras when someone dies in the street. The sombra outside reminded me a little of the chalk outline that police in the movies put where someone is murdered.

November 15, 2000: Doña Celia was talking about a woman who had died this year. She said the woman's daughter was in the U.S. working, and had left her children with her mother for years, rarely sending money. When she died, the daughter came and

spent a lot of money on an ofrenda. Doña Mari said, "So what does that get her?" She also commented on people paying others to put up their ofrendas, saying that only the families really know what should go in the ofrenda, because only they really knew the dead person.

OBJECTS, SPACE AND MOVEMENT

Many authors have commented on the importance of exchange, both between the living and the dead and among the living, during the Days of the Dead in Mexico (Nutini 1988, El Guindi 1977). Food, as a form of commensality, plays a key role in these exchanges. Eating is a social activity, an embodied practice that serves to bring people together in space and time to share food, ingesting, in the process, more than simple sustenance. Serementakis writes,

> Commensality here is not just the social organization of food and drink consumption and the rules that enforce social institutions at the level of consumption. Nor can it be reduced to the food-related senses of taste and odor. Commensality can be defined as the exchange of sensory memories and emotions, and of substances and objects incarnating remembrance and feeling. Historical consciousness and other forms of social knowledge are created and then replicated in time and space through commensal ethics and exchange" (1994: 37).

Even if the dead cannot taste what has been prepared for them, they can share in the social interaction that emerges from the sharing of food, particularly bread, which is symbolically connected with resurrection in many cultural contexts (Sutton 2001: 31).[157] Lomnitz confirms this connection, stating that "the offering of bread and wine to the souls in purgatory was a means of transferring the communion in Jesus Christ from the

[157] See Stoller (1989) for the importance of including the senses, particularly taste, in ethnographic accounts and Csordas (1993), who argues for the incorporation of phenomenological approaches to ethnography, to complement the more common textual approaches.

living to the dead and, in this act, freeing them to go to heaven, in the same way that the Eucharist had the power to clean and forgive sins on earth" (2006: 226).

Clearly the reciprocity manifest in the giving and receiving of food as well as less ephemeral material objects as part of death rituals is crucial in Teloloapan as a means of creating and sustaining social relationships. At each commemoration, whether it is the first novena, the *cabo de año* or the ofrenda, a family member stands by the door with a list of who brought what; this facilitates the process of retuning plates and embroidered napkins, lets the family know "who their friends are," and reminds them where they will need to "*acompañar*" if there is a death.

The complicated practice of returning fruit for bread and bread for fruit (all on the correct plates, with the correct napkins, and to the correct houses) evokes the famous *kula* ring studied by Malinowski and Mauss so long ago, and the rules governing reciprocal exchange of like, but not identical, objects, as a means of maintaining social and economic ties with other groups. The return of material objects necessitates the movement of bodies through space; it forces the members of one family to physically trace the space between their home (which had usually also been the home of the deceased) and the homes of the members of their social network. Stopping at each house creates places, "centers of felt values," according to Tuan; "place is a pause in movement" (1977: 137). But it is too much trouble to keep track of which plates and napkins belong to which families, so many have begun to use disposable dishes, which do not have to be returned. So as the practice is "being lost" in Teloloapan; according to many Teloloapenses, the relations they represent are being lost, as well.

The importance of movement and pause is particularly evident in circulation between house, church and cemetery that takes place during the first novena after a person's death. It is vital that the body be *velado* in his or her home, whenever possible.

The body must be placed first on the floor, on top of the earthen cross. As is the case for contagious magic, the physical contact between the body and the cross is necessary for the sombra to be able to impregnate the earth. Only then may the body rest in its coffin, passing its last night in its own home before moving to its "real house" in the cemetery the next day. Male friends and family carry the coffin from the house, marked with a black ribbon above the door, to the church: a midway point in the journey. Here a mass is said for the deceased before the body is carried on to the cemetery to be buried. It is traditional that the members of the procession go on foot. The municipal cemetery is at the top of a steep hill, and stories abound about how the bodies of the dead who do not want to accept the finality of burial often get very heavy as they approach the cemetery.[158] Thus, a space is traced from the house, to the church, to the tomb; the first and the last are structurally equivalent.

For several days, the sombra remains in the house, although the body has already been buried. This is a kind of liminal time, during which the spirit of the dead still lingers. As I described above, in the ritual called *levantar la sombra*, the earth and flowers that make up the cross upon which the body had rested, and which have saturated that particular spot with significance, are gathered together in a bag by the *padrinos de la sombra*, guided by a religious expert. The family goes to meet the *padrinos de la cruz*, who are carrying the first (sometimes the only) cross that will mark the gravesite, and all process to the cemetery to bury the sombra at the foot of the grave and mark it with the cross. After the *padrinos* have been ritually cleansed, a meal is given to the participants, and the last prayers are recited. In a practiced narrative of transformation, the deceased has been successfully transported from the world of the living to that of the dead. He or

[158] The theme of the heavy body is related to another popular Mexican narrative: that of the *santo* being carried in a pilgrimage that suddenly gets very heavy in one place, causing those carrying him to leave him "where he wants to be."

she may return (according to some) only to partake in the ofrendas of the Days of the Dead. At the same time, it is hoped that the bereaved family and friends have also undergone a transformation, albeit an emotional one.

MEMORY AND MATERIAL CULTURE

The creation of the ofrendas may also be seen as a practice that forms a step in the grieving process. The ofrendas are sites of memory (Nora 1989), constituted by: first, a space set aside in the home of the deceased and/or the deceased's relatives; second, the accumulation and arrangement of memorial objects, photographs, religious figures, texts, visual and auditory media, food, and flowers; third, theatrical elements like the *cielo*, lights, paint, sound equipment, structural supports and so on, that form a scenic backdrop for the displayed objects and help to covert a domestic space into the even more intimate *lieu de memoire*; and finally, bodies—those whose labor creates the ofrenda by transforming space, and those whose memories give it meaning. There is a fifth element, more absence than presence. Whether this lack is perceived as the ghost of the deceased, or simply his or her absence, loss and desire are what drive the ofrenda. As Hallam and Hockney write,

> In these material forms and spatial enclosures from which 'the figure has escaped' we find traces, measurements and models of the body and its plight. Through embodied engagement with such objects, and the spaces they inhabit, the presence of absence comes to be produced" (2001: 85).

"Space contains compressed time," wrote Bachelard, "that is what space is for" (1964: 8). Creating an ofrenda is a way of mobilizing domestic space, converting a room into a container for compressed time, stuffing it with mnemonic devices designed to both

represent the most salient elements of the identity of the deceased (according to his or her family) and to evoke *recuerdos* in the public.

The objects contained in the ofrenda are of several kinds. They include the objects of exchange mentioned above: food, candles and flowers. They also include effigies of the dead, like photographs, videotape or figures made of cardboard or paper maché and the deceased's personal objects or clothing. The first are mimetic: copies of the deceased whose power is derived from their likeness to him or her. The second are objects which came into contact with the deceased, drawing their power from the second law of sympathetic magic: contagion. Both types serve as surrogates for the absent subject.

Other objects are miniatures, indexical, small-scale copies of activities or places associated with the deceased. In the miniature, wrote Bachelard, "values become condensed and enriched….One must go beyond logic in order to experience what is large in what is small" (1956: 150). The reduction of objects in scale allows us to comprehend them, to visually capture and consume them, reducing "the space of the subject and the space of the social" (Stewart 1993: 68), compressing and materializing the deceased's life story into a tiny object which, despite its size, may be packed with details which draw the viewer inside it, and inside their own memories.

According to Serementakis, memory "is a culturally mediated material practice that is activated by embodied acts and semantically dense objects" (1994: 9). A "semantically dense" ofrenda object may be viewed as a prosthesis of the subject, "a foreign element that reconstructs that which cannot stand up on its own, at once propping up and extending its host" (Wigley, in González 1995: 135). González writes of collections of such objects as autotopographies (1995). Ofrenda objects, collected as they are by family members and not the subject, may be said to constitute biotopographies. In Gonzalez's terms, these are "museums of the self." She writes,

> Existing along the continuum of monument and microcosm, this collection, arrangement, or storage of symbolically significant objects represents a personal identity in relation to a larger social network of meaning and functions to anchor the self-reflective image of the subject within a local, earthly cosmos. In the creation of an autotopography—which does not include all personal property but only those objects seen to signify an 'individual' identity—the material world is called upon to present a physical map of memory, history, and belief. The autobiographical object thus becomes a prosthetic device: an addition, a trace, and a replacement for the intangible aspects of desire, identification, and social relations (ibid. 134).

As is the case for any history, the life history represented in the ofrenda is replete with silences (Trouillot 1995). Never "finished," the ofrenda represents others' partial and often nostalgic view of a subject, creates a space for both remembering and forgetting, forging "a metonymic link with past events and absent persons" (González 1995: 134). The gaps in the ofrenda demand embodied participation for its mnemonic circuit to be complete. As Serementakis writes,

> The sensory landscape and its meaning-endowed objects bear within them emotional and historical sedimentation that can provoke and ignite gestures, discourses and acts—acts which open up these objects' stratigraphy. Thus the surround of material culture is neither stable nor fixed, but inherently transitive, demanding connection and completion by the perceiver (1994: 7).

The other silence, beyond that which is excluded in the object-narrative, is that of loss. The presence of so many material objects, and the excess of memory which they often invoke, highlights the fact that the subject him or herself is missing.

> In these material forms and spatial enclosures from which 'the figure has escaped' we find traces, measurements and models of the body and its plight. Through embodied engagement with such objects, and the spaces they inhabit, the presence of absence comes to be produced" (Hallam and Hockney 2001: 85).

It is in the uncanny gap between the excessive materiality of the ofrenda and the palpable absence of the loved one that desire and memory are produced. "Memory is an index of loss" (Davis and Stern 1989: 4), and loss animates the ofrenda.

Bread, Fruit and Candles

A Mnemonic Montage

*April 11, 2000***:** Fidel is arranging all the photographs of the devils in chronological order because he wants to have a representation of the history of the diablos here in the taller. The first picture is the enlarged black and white one, one of the first pictures of the diablos, then the one with Don Fidel putting horns on the vieja, then the series with Fidel when his father was in Mexico, then the ones with Don Fidel after he came back. He wants to put the one with Don Fidel working on the mask (that was used in the rezos) last, to finish the history. He wants to organize the masks also in chronological order, so that the taller will be both museum and exhibition gallery.

May 10, 2000: Fidel dreamed of his father last night, for the first time. He said his father was standing in the taller, exactly where his sombra had been. He saw it as a form of communication, and felt that his father was going to make sure that the man in Chilapa came through with the money he owed Fidel.

June 24, 2000: Yesterday, Fidel's uncle Cristian visited, and he and Fidel talked about Don Fidel's death. Fidel explained the circumstances of his death, once again, saying afterward that "la herida es todavía fresca," reliving the event as he remembered it. Hearing the details again, I also felt sad.

*July 18, 2000***:** El Cano came by, drunk, and seemed worried about the devil tradition. He asked me what Fidel was going to do, saying that a lot of people have asked him if the tradition was going to continue without Don Fidel. He told me that as his *compañera*, I would have to support him and encourage him to continue. He also said there was the possibility that a tequila company was going to sponsor a tribute for Don Fidel.

*September 24, 2000***:** The devils went to the cemetery today. The first stop, of course, was Don Fidel's grave. El Cano and El Peligro said a few words, and Fidel said that his father would have been pleased. We also stopped by the grave of El Güero, who was killed this past year in a fight.

February 10, 2001: Fidel tore up part of the floor today. He found an old coin which had been cemented into one of the tiles in the bedroom, and remembered that his father had laid those tiles when he helped remodel this house (in the days when he was working as an *albañil*). In the other room, a black bull used to appear in the night. He thought that perhaps the coin was a sign that Don Fidel had hidden something underneath the floor, perhaps money. He did manage to put the tiles back so that no one would notice they had been displaced.

March 15, 2007: One of the most admired objects in the exhibition of Fidel's masks at the Regional Museum of Guerrero in Chilpancingo is called "*La Muerte del Tigre y su Resurgimiento*," or "The Death and Resurrection of the Tiger." The mask features a tiger's skull with a hole in the top, which permits a close observer to see the

tiny figures of devils inside. Fidel says it represents the death of Don Fidel, but the resurgence of the diablos. Another commemorative mask in the collection is "*Teloloapan y sus Leyendas*." "Teloloapan and its Legends" presents the most important elements of Teloloapense identity: the legend of Tecampa and Na, the Tecampana, the River that Runs Underneath the Rocks, *jaguares*, the diablos and, of course, Don Fidel, unmasked, cracking a *chicote*.

One of the focal points of the exhibit is a reproduction of Don Fidel's *taller*. On a small raised platform, Fidel placed his father's old *tepehuaje* work bench, scattered with woodworking tools, horns and pieces of *colorín*. A photograph featuring Don Fidel working at the same bench was mounted on the floor. Don Fidel's old *morral* (with a Coke in it) hung off the side of a painted wooden chair which sat empty in front of the bench.

The Taller, Museo Regional de Guerrero

Conclusions

> The other is the phantasm of historiography, the object that it seeks, honors, and buries. A labor of separation concerning this uncanny and fascinating proximity is effected….it aims at calming the dead who still haunt the present, and at offering scriptural tombs (de Certeau 2000: 24).

In the preceding pages, I have attempted to tease out the complexities that characterize the relationship between local and national historical discourses by addressing what I have termed the "poetics and politics" of commemorative practice in northern Guerrero. *Diablos, machos, broncos* and *indios* populate this poetics, both as the phantasmagorically political "others" of Mexican historiography, and as individual characters in local performance traditions. These characters are tied to specific places within Guerrero (Teloloapan, Chilacachapa, Coatepec Costales, Acatempan, Ixcateopan) and to individual Guerrerenses (Don Fidel, Don Filiberto, Don Jairo, and the list goes on), but also to an imaginary geography in which the spaces between the center and the periphery are marked by mutual attraction and repulsion, wildness and desire.

The fiestas patrias of Teloloapan, Chilacachapa and Coatepec Costales, the Abrazo of Acatempan, the festival of Cuauhtémoc in Ixcateopan and the ofrendas for the dead are elements of local identity, as well as practices that contribute to the construction of particular habitus, situated in gendered bodies and specific geographical, political and cultural contexts. Participants in these practices express complementary and competing discourses about the past, present and future and about the relationships between their localities and the outside world, simultaneously invoking the concrete (objects, bodies, blood, science) and the phantasmagoric (tradition, enchantment, loss, memory).

In each case, a claim is staked for the cultural and historical importance of the local, and state and national authorities are entreated to pay more attention to local

tradition. Nevertheless, the eagle did not land in Teloloapan, but in Mexico City—the center that discursively relegates all other places to "*la provincia*," a space of cultural wealth, but social and economic backwardness.

LOCAL SELVES AND OTHERS

The first question I posed in the introduction referred to the particularities of each performance tradition: how does each one of the five commemorative practices analyzed in this dissertation confound simplistic notions of centers and peripheries by expressing local political, geographic, gender and class differentiation? Despite the stake that all five traditions have in constructing a particular relationship between marginalized local places and centralized national space, each one also complicates a simplistic geographical-political continuum between the local and the national, the powerless and the powerful. Each tradition emerges from, and contributes to, the construction and transformation of a particular constellation of internalized difference: gender, class, age, ethnicity and geography. In Teloloapan, the discourse of *los diablos de antes* and *los diablos de ahora* establish gives voice to distinctive relations with the past, from the nostalgia expressed by *diablos viejos* about the ferocity of the diablos of their youth, to the excitement and bravado of diablos who have begun to use larger and heavier masks to prove themselves, and the enthusiasm of young children who now have an opportunity to participate in the contest of the *diablitos*. Moreover, what was once a purely masculine practice, constitutive of hegemonic manhood, has been challenged by women's participation in the devil competition. In a local discotheque, in September of 2008, even the queen pageant, a bastion of idealized femininity, spawned an alternative gender performance: a contest to elect *La Reina Gay de las Fiestas Patrias*.

Masculinity, and the expression of a warrior/charro identity, is key for appreciating the gender expressions present in the Abrazo of Acatempan, which additionally must be understood in terms of the often tense relations between the cabecera of Teloloapan, from whence arrives Iturbide, the royalist turncoat and future traitor to the ideals of Independence, and the dependent town of Acatempan, identified with Vicente Guerrero, who denied his own father in the name of the *patria*, and who gave his name to the state itself after his martyrdom at the hands of centralist politicians.

Gender relations also come to the fore in the alternative fiestas patrias of El Calvario, Coatepec Costales, Chilacachapa and Apetlanca, particularly in terms of the participation of the heroic Doña Josefa and the Américas who fight on horseback alongside their bronco compatriot. But in this context, ethnicity, another marker of difference emerges in the guise of two "indigenous" groups of actors in the simulacro of the War for Independence. The Apaches, wearing loincloths and feathers, are wild "others" even to the also-indigenous, but more comprehensible Mecos, themselves internally differentiated between local participants and returning migrants.

Of course, nowhere is the discourse of "Indianness" more salient than in the celebration of Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec emperor. The discovery of what many argued were his remains in 1949 set off a polemic between hispanicists and indigenists that continues to this day in Ixcateopan, where each year, thousands of believers descend on the little mestizo town north of Teloloapan, transforming it momentarily into the felt center of the Native American world. But stories are told in the other Ixcateopan, the one located in Guerrero's "real" indigenous region, which challenge the "official" Ixcateopan's claims to being the birth and burial place of one of the last figures that resisted Spanish dominance in Mexico. "The bones are really here," claim many

inhabitants of Ixcateopan de la Montaña. “Both the Spaniards who followed them from Acallán and the people in the northern town were fooled.”

In the last chapter, I address the ofrenda tradition of Teloloapan. Here, the most pertinent differences include the distinctions made between those who can afford elaborate ofrendas and those who cannot, the line drawn between the “authentic” celebration of the Days of the Dead and the “inauthentic” celebration of Halloween, and the more basic ontological difference between the living and the dead (those who create ofrendas, and those for whom the ofrendas are created). In some ways, it is this last distinction which warrants the most commentary, however obvious it may be, for the Mexican nation was built on the backs of the dead: dead Indians massacred by conquerors or killed by contagious disease, dead caudillos martyred for the national cause, the one million citizens killed during the Revolution, the victims of migration, gender violence, narcotrafficking and political assassination. Since the mid twentieth-century, death has even come to represent Mexico to the outside world. But as Lomnitz writes, “there is no inventor, nor owner, nor meaning that can contain death, that can tame it” (2006: 457). Whether they are the honored remains of insurgent caudillos, the reconstructed bones of the last Aztec Emperor, or the loved ones who journey back to earth from purgatory to enjoy the odor of bread and mescal or the fragrance of cempoaxuchitl, skeletons in Mexico do not stay buried, but return to haunt the living.

THE POETICS OF HISTORY IN NORTHERN GUERRERO

The unearthing of the purported bones of Cuauhtémoc, an event itself sparked by the discovery of Cortés´ unquiet bones in 1947, is the most obvious example of the return of the dead that I discuss. But not even Guerrero and Iturbide, whose bones have indeed

been identified and interred, are allowed to rest in peace, as the two generals are brought back to life in Acatempan to fight and reconcile year after year. Pedro Ascencio and his diablos emerge each September from the caves around Teloloapan. The *Días de los Muertos* recall the dead from their tombs so that they may return for a few short hours to commune with the living. In popular historical discourse and local commemorative performance, the repressed returns in full force and, instead of lack, we are confronted with the carnival excess of diabolic masks, feathered dancers, mock battles and overflowing ofrendas.

The resurgence of the dead, a characteristic of commemoration in general, is the basis for each of the five traditions analyzed in this dissertation, and brings me to the second question I posed in the introduction: what shared elements of these traditions contribute to a regional poetics of history in northern Guerrero? There are six central aspects to this regional poetics: a theatrical or mimetic mode of expression, a carnivalesque aesthetic, the pairing of presence with absence in a particularly unheimlich ethos, the highlighting of *bronco* characters, an emphasis on historical events which feature struggles between local defendants and invading forces, and a re-orienting of nationalist history in order to emphasize local experience.

The theatricality of each tradition finds expression in different ways: masking, in the case of Teloloapan; scripted dialogue in the case of the alternative fiestas patrias and the Abrazo of Acatempan; dance performance for many of the participants in the festival of Cuauhtémoc in Ixcateopan, and the staging of ofrendas with representational images and artifacts for Teloloapan´s *Días de los Muertos*. Carnival elements find their way into many of these traditions, but are particularly notable in the case of what may be a particularly Teloloapense aesthetic which incorporates giant masks with a profusion of protuberances, multiple figures and colors, and the ofrendas which express loss through

excess of presence—two-and three-dimensional saints, photographs, candles, flowers, food, cherubs, columns, tombs, miniatures, paper and more paper—part of the *unheimlich* sensibility expressed in this regional poetics of history and memory.

In the discourse of popular history, dependent as it is on *lieux de mémoire*, the division between the "real" and the "imaginary" is not absolute. I do not mean to imply that "truth" is unimportant in popular historiography. On the contrary, as we have seen in Acatempan and Ixcateopan, "what really happened" can be a matter of the utmost gravity. Unlike "scientific" or institutional historians though, the custodians of social memory are historical *bricoleurs*; motivated more by attachment to place than to disciplinary guidelines, they weave together history and memory from a wide range of sources. Like their academic counterparts, they construct historical and mnemonic narratives that depend on concrete objects and images: maps, glyphs, signed documents, ruins, monuments, masks, bones, rocks, and offerings. However, these narratives also rest on less tangible sources: stories of enchanted markets that vanish when a potential buyer enters, buried treasure and underground pyramids, hidden documents, missing tables, the scent of flowers and the taste of food, candlelight, and stories passed from generation to generation. Popular historiography, like the margin itself (Bhabha 1990b: 315), is uncanny, unheimlich, phantasmagorical. "What really happened" can never be fully encompassed in popular historiography, nor, I might add, in academic discourse. The origins always lie just beyond our reach, and something is always left out. Popular historiography, built as it is on desire, may be better equipped to deal with this ever present lack.

In this historical poetics, things protrude, like the horns of figures of the devil masks. Parts of ancient pyramids jut out of the ground, although much remains hidden; and the bones of a long-dead hero (or eight unknown ancestors including a mestizo

woman) refuse to stay buried. Heavy corpses try and delay the moment of their interment. Grieving relatives try and reanimate their loved ones with oregano and onion. Guerrerenses from the past possess their descendents, in performance, in memory, or in tiny particles in their blood. “Me” becomes “Not not me” in shifting discourses and embodied practices involving carnivalesque diablos, *broncudo* revolutionaries, wild Apaches, comic Mecos, warrior Aztecs, manly women or womanly men, the living and the dead.

Commemorative mimesis in northern Guerrero links performing bodies with a chronotopic understanding of the relationship between place and history. Many of the performers embody historical or tropic figures implicated in the discourse of Guerrero bronco: a way of talking about the “wild” margin from the center, but reappropriated in the context of commemoration. For participants in these traditions, bronco figures like diablos, machos, warriors and Indians serve as a means of making a claim to resistance against imposition from outside. These are figures which (for better or worse) refuse to be tamed or controlled, but continue to struggle against state or foreign domination.

Of course, resistance is never absolute, and the poetics of history in northern Guerrero express a deeply ambivalent structure of feeling about the relationship between the community and the State. It is not coincidental then, that the historical events which serve as the backdrops for the traditions analyzed in the preceding chapters—Mexico´s conquest by Spain and later war for independence from the colonial power—are ideal settings for the expression of the relationships between selves and others, inside and outside, centers and peripheries.

THE POLITICS OF HISTORY IN NORTHERN GUERRERO

As I have stated before, northern Guerrero is haunted; it is full of ghosts: heroes, ordinary people, and even events from the past that return to haunt the living, and living people and places that refuse to leave the past in the past. Guerrerense historiography is also haunted by the phantasm of "the nation," a ghostly presence that draws its energy from practices in local places which, like troublesome poltergeists, nag at the nation, tugging at the mists that shroud the center so that those mists may drift over and blanket the periphery as well. Here, poetics and politics merge.

And so we come to the last of the research questions I originally posed: how does the historical imaginary of northern Guerrero relate to the paradigm of the linear, heroic, nationalist historiography from which it draws many of its elements? In many ways, both historiographic paradigms are mutually dependent: the state needs the local to flesh out its essence, to provide an "authentic" content for its claims of cultural and ethnic plurality. Likewise, local commemorative traditions rely on the state to validate their claims to historical importance, incorporating nationally celebrated characters, events and (sometimes) dates and insisting on the presence of state authorities. The current battles over which municipality should be officially recognized as the true "cradle of the *patria*" and the resentment some inhabitants of Ixcateopan de la Montaña direct toward Ixcateopan del Norte are examples of the perceived importance of state recognition, which may even be used to secure material benefits: monuments, roads, schools, and so forth.

However, the relationship between local communities and the state is not simply one of mutual dependence, but also of mutual distrust, and even disdain. State representatives and intellectuals often express the belief that local traditions are contrary to progress and that many "provincials" are unreasonably stubborn about sticking to those

traditions. And "provincials" are often wary of the promises made by state authorities, which they feel are made for political gain rather than a genuine interest in the welfare of the people. Historical counternarratives serve as recriminations against a centralized State unable to alleviate the very real suffering of its marginalized citizens, and allow participants in commemorative performance to think the relationships between local, national and international places, tradition and modernity, power and authenticity. Commemoration may serve to legitimize hegemonic power relations, but it may also serve as a means of resistance and transgression, thanks to its chronotopic mobilization of local spaces and popular historiography. Like the presence of ofrenda objects that underscore the absence of a loved one, the simulacros that locate Cuauhtémoc, Vicente Guerrero and Pedro Ascencio in particular places serve to highlight their (moral) nonexistence in the national space.

Throughout this dissertation, I have drawn attention to the ways in which national figures, dates and events are remembered and resignified in popular commemorative practice. Each one of the commemorations I analyze—the tradition of the diablos of Teloloapan, the alternative fiestas patrias that take place in the region, the Abrazo of Acatempan, the Festival of Cuauhtémoc and the ofrendas for the *Días de los Muertos*– provide a means by which individuals and groups both participate in and critically comment on the modern nation from its social and geographic margins. These commemorations are chronotopic performances which emerge from a particular conflation of local places, microhistories and gendered bodies, grounding national abstractions in lived experience.

EPILOGUE

Reflections, II

When I first moved to Teloloapan, Fidel invited me to see the Tecampana, "the rock that sings." According to local tradition, if a visitor visits the Tecampana accompanied by a lover, and makes it ring out by striking the rock with a stone, he or she will have to stay. Now, nine years later, I have made both a personal and professional life in Guerrero, proving the legend true. Reminding me that the field "is not the unmediated world of the 'others' but the world between ourselves and the others" (Hastrup 1992: 17), I realize how our discourses and our lives have interpenetrated, much more than either of us could have anticipated when his father asked him to teach me the art of mask making.

I do not mean to romanticize intersubjectivity; like any other relationship, power informs the way in which we relate to one another. Between machismo and feminism, the status conferred by knowledge of local tradition and the prestige of U.S. citizenship, we have spent the last nine years negotiating our life together. This dissertation was created in the process. Now that it is finished, I realize how intricately bound up my personal life here has been with the project upon which it is based. The "field" shifts again, and I find myself wondering what to do next.

A few days before writing these last pages, my family and I returned from visiting Teloloapan for the 2008 ofrendas. The roads between Teloloapan and Chilpancingo were marked with signs indicating "*Ruta 2010*," a route tracing connections between historically significant localities which the federal government has established in honor of the upcoming bicentennial of the war for Indpendence (and centennial of the Revolution).[159] Along with this recognition, it is rumored that funds are to be made

[159] There is another "route" which should be mentioned in the context of the Devil and current events: in Guerrero is commonly believed that organized crime and narcotraffickers were deeply involved in manipulating the recent municipal elections. One reporter for a national newspaper wrote that the presence

available to the places on the route in order to improve their infrastructure and build monuments as a strategy for attracting tourism. It remains to be seen what specific material benefits will accrue to the municipios which can make claims of historical significance, and it is possible that many expenditures related to historical commemoration will be deprioritized as a result of the current economic crisis. Fidel, though, hopes to use the bicentennial as an opportunity to convince the new administration in Teloloapan to build the *Museo de los Diablos de Teloloapan Fidel de la Puente Fabián*, in honor of his father.

At this moment, he is downstairs in his workshop, making another mask. This diablo is to be called "Birth, Gestation and Tradition of Mexico," also known as "Ana's Dissertation," which will debut in next year's *concurso*. Yesterday, he finished carving tiny figures of Guerrero and Iturbide; today he is recreating his father's ofrenda in miniature, to be placed inside the mouth of a jaguar, the new mask's main feature, and tomorrow he will design Cuauhtémoc's grave.

The Ghost of Pedro Ascencio

I conclude, for now, with a story I recently came across, in which the "eagle that flew away," the Devil and the treasure of Pedro Ascencio are all featured characters. According to this narrative, collected by Celedonio Martínez Serrano (1978), Pedro Ascencio established his camp in the mountains of northern Guerrero, in a place called *el Cerro de Tequesquite*, which was in reality an enchanted city dating to prehispanic times. The author relates that Tequesquite had been the center of an old Aztec kingdom, famed for its splendor. One day, an enormous eagle flew over the region, looking for a place to land. The local lord ordered his warriors to follow the eagle, and bring it back dead or

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of narcotrafficking is particularly present in the entire region of the Tierra Caliente, but that "the *ruta del infierno* begins in Telolopan" (Sánchez 2008).

alive. When they finally tracked the majestic bird down, they found it nesting in a tree, around which a rich and beautiful city was being shaped. Fearful that the eagle would fly away and leave the city half-formed, the hunters sought to end its life, and let fly a volley of well-aimed arrows. However, not one arrow reached its target, and the eagle took off. As it flew away, the wonderous city was converted into a strange mountain that looked much like a large castle – the Cerro de Tequesquite. The lord and all his people abandoned their lands and followed the eagle to Tenochtitlan.

Centuries later, Pedro Ascencio established his camp inside the enchanted hill of Tequesquite, filling its caves with the treasure he looted from the Spanish and their followers. His doom was sealed, however, when he stole a coffer of priceless religious reliquaries from the priest in Iguala. When Ascencio was martyred at the end of the war, the cave and all its treasures disappeared, and so Tequesquite was covered by another layer of enchantment. Long after the war was over witnesses described seeing Don Pedro riding over the hills that had been the site of many battles with the royalists, and the rumor spread that the ghost of Pedro Ascencio *andaba penando*. Some hardy souls who spoke to the spectre declared that the hero had offered them all the treasure he had accumulated in exchange for crawling to Iguala on their knees in order to return the stolen coffer to the church. Only then would Ascencio and his men be accepted into heaven.

The narrator of the story tells of Don Bonifacio, an acquaintance who had long been involved in dealings with the Devil which had allowed him to accumulate riches and women. Don Bonifacio, who was accustomed to strange events and conversations with uncanny figures, accepted the deal, and was escorted to the cave where he was treated to the sight of thousands of bars of silver and gold, jewels and piles of priceless objects. At the agreed-upon time, Don Bonafacio went to meet Pedro Ascencio in order to take the

coffer to Iguala. To his consternation, when he arrived at the meeting place, he found that Ascencio was accompanied by Death and the Devil himself, who had come to take Don Bonafacio back to Hell, fearful that their previous agreement would be nullified by the pious act of returning the gold Ascencio had stolen from the church.

After a long struggle, *El Cuernudo y la Muerte* were banished thanks to the fact that Don Bonifacio was wearing a small silver cross which they were unable to tear from his neck. But the *empautado* (pacted man) was mortally wounded in the fight, and was therefore unable to undertake the task appointed for him by Pedro Ascencio, who returned, weeping, to the hills from which he came. Presumably, Don Pedro wanders there still, waiting forsome brave soul to release him and his men from their penance, allowing them finally to rest in peace.

So it is in Guerrero, where citizens negotiate daily with social and economic marginalization, as well as violence both intimate and impersonal. But history itself may prove to be a means of revindication, if one could just gain access to its truths…which, for now, remain hidden, buried, or enchanted.

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